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The
Intermediate State

ARTHUR WILLIAMSON, B.D.



THE INTERMEDIATE STATE:

AN ESSAY

UPON

THE RELATION OF PRAYER TO A CONSCIOUS
AND PROGRESSIVE LIFE
IN THE INTERMEDIATE STATE.

BY

ARTHUR WILLIAMSON, B.D.,

LATE SCHOLAR

AND THEOLOGICAL PRIZEMAN OF CHRIST'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,
VICAR OF S. JAMES' NORLANDS, W.

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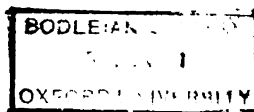
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THE INTERMEDIATE STATE.

THE subject of any part of human life which lies outside the range of known experience demands the exercise of great care in its treatment, lest the imagination be found to transgress the boundaries of truth and revelation, and the conclusions of mere speculation, prejudice, and sentiment be accepted as possessing equal credibility with those of sound and reasonable argument.

Beyond the fact of the future life itself, the *truth* of which is established by the facts revealed and taught in Holy Scripture, and the reasonableness of which is shown us in its analogy to the lessons learnt in our study of the natural world,* so placing this fundamental doctrine of the Christian religion without fear of much contradiction amongst the verities of the faith, all else that is connected with the life itself, both with its nature and possibilities, must remain a matter in greater or less degree of probable evidence.

In some points of detail connected with this future life, it is to be observed, the grounds of supposition are so strong, that there is a moral as distinguished from an actual and positive certainty of the correctness and truth of the conclusions which rest upon them, and although we abide by the statement that "probable evidence in its very nature affords but an imperfect kind of information," still, if there be a reasonable presumption that such evidence is something more than conjectural speculation, and at least of the character of "low probability," we may without violence to truth and justice, and in the absence of ascertained proof to the contrary, accept such evidence as a satisfactory foundation for faith and even practice.

* "Butler's Analogy," part i., chapter 1.

This we confess to be the nature of much of the evidence that we shall bring forward in regard to that period of the future life called *intermediate*, as coming between death and final resurrection. We at least have no wish to claim for it the authority of certain proof unless it should be in agreement with the express or justly inferential word of revelation ; at the same time we maintain, that in much of the probable evidence we shall produce, there is a credibility which should, and where the mind is not biassed by preconceived ideas will, carry great weight.

Our contention then in this Essay is that *a conscious and progressive life in the Intermediate State is a reasonable argument in support of the ancient authorised practice of prayer for the dead.*

The premise or antecedent proposition of the argument involves, it will be seen, three distinct considerations, viz., (i.) that there is a state of life intermediate between death and resurrection ; (ii.) that this life is one of conscious existence, and (iii.) that the state of life possesses certain possibilities of development and progress.

On the other hand, for the argument itself, it will be necessary to show what the ancient practice was with regard to prayer for the dead, as well as to discuss the nature of the authority on which it is found to rest.

Before, however, we enter on the subject, it is important to view its consideration generally from the standpoint of modern thought and necessity. In a speculative age, where the demand and search after orthodox truth press hardly upon the minds of men, it is a matter of no slight consequence that a careful and competent investigation of what may really be accepted as "of the faith" should always be made. Ignorance, it may be rightly assumed, can never be desirable where knowledge would be of real and essential benefit.

So in the matter before us, there is an amount of unauthorised speculation, and popular misconception as to

what really takes place after death, which forces upon us the deprecatory assertion of the Apostle made to the Thessalonian Church concerning such ignorance.*

It is only by becoming possessed of such knowledge as may be rightly entertained, we can hope to escape from the erroneous ideas of the life of "them that are asleep" which are being propagated and widely circulated in much of the popular literature on the subject. The irreverent materialism, the fanciful conjecture, the foolish superstition, the vain romance, the quixotic delusion, of much that is said and written about the condition of the departed soul, tend to destroy the dignity and true meaning of this part of the scene of future life.

It is hardly a matter of surprise that there should be a general revolt of the educated mind from such teaching: whilst at the same time it is more than necessary to seek to substitute in its place, as far as possible, the true knowledge, and by this means counteract the evil influence of that which is untrue and misleading.

We live unmistakeably in a time when a special attraction is being felt towards every subject connected with the future. There are those who would regard this as an indication of the approaching Advent of Christ, and as the awakening of a desire within the human soul which will in that day be met and satisfied. This may be true or not, but whatever be the right explanation, the fact remains that there is considerable anxiety felt in the present day to know more about all that lies beyond the range of present time and existence.

This tendency, then, of modern thought needs to be guided, or it may drift almost unconsciously into the tide of speculation, which is often more disastrous to the cause of truth than actual unbelief, and certainly less welcome to it than ignorance.

Returning to the previous point, viz., the prevailing ignorance at this special crisis on the subject of the Intermediate State,

* 1 Thess. iv. 13.

we trace one of the most mischievous results in the widespread confusion which exists between Paradise and Heaven, as though they were the same place, and as though all the souls of the blessed, immediately upon death, realised the Beatific vision.

Hence, to many minds, it appears that everyone at death finds himself immediately in heaven or hell, whereby the place and significance of final and general* judgment become entirely lost to view, and souls being thus made to receive their lot of bliss or woe, before the day of actual sentence, are, as soon as they become separated from the body,† plunged into the sorrows of hell, or translated to the joys of heaven.

The reason for the prevailing ignorance about the Intermediate State is not far to seek. The shock which the Church of England sustained both before and at the time of the Reformation, by the mediæval notion of Purgatory, and by the excesses which were practised in the matter of Indulgences and

* I use the words "final and general" advisedly, and in reference to the day of Christ's Advent, when, as S. Augustine teaches, "*judicandi erant et boni et mali*" (*De Verbis Dom: Serm. 64*); and again, "*Ille qui stetit ante hominem, judicaturus est omnem hominem*" (*Opera Tom. vi. l., iii., c. 8*). Particular and individual judgment is always taking place (*S. James v. 9*)—judgment, however, more of the nature of retribution than of formal decision. So in the Parable of Dives and Lazarus we find such a judgment following immediately upon death. This, as we shall show elsewhere, is not to be confounded with the judgment of the Last Day, which is final, and, so far as we know, irreversible.

I need hardly add that this Christian Doctrine of a universal judgment is most seriously challenged in the present day, and as a striking case in point would refer to the article on the Divine Judgment in Hertzog's *Encyclopædia* by Professor Ebrard.

† We have a curious and unfortunate perpetuation of this idea in the familiar stanza, only lately removed from Hymns Ancient and Modern, of one of our best-known hymns.

"As the tree falls, so must it lie;
As the man lives, so will he die;
As the man dies, so must he be
All through the days of eternity" *—

as if deriving its authority from *Ecclesiastes xi. 3*, whereas there is no reference to the next life in the passage.

* See Kingsley's "*From Death to Life*," p. 7.

Prayers for the Dead, led, without doubt, to a very powerful reaction, and explain, in very great measure, the timidity she has since displayed in returning to this part of the faith once delivered to the Saints.* Moreover, the invasion of Puritan thought and sentiment afterwards, swept away much of the precious heritage of traditional belief, in the laudable effort to exterminate much more that was absolutely misleading and untrue: † and only now, when we are recovering the wish, and are honestly endeavouring, to return to the standards of primitive truth and revelation, do we receive any encouragement to open this almost closed chapter in the volume of future life.

One point, however, we must continually bear in mind in the consideration of this subject : God has allowed no complete revelation of the Intermediate State. It is not merely that we know very little, but that He has taken care that we shall know very little. Nor is it difficult to find reasons for this withholding of Divine confidence.

The veil of mystery is partially hung over the future in order that we may not be so intent on its vision, as to forget the interests and importance of present time. Life has to be lived, work has to be done, talents have to be used, probation has to be endured, Divine sentence has to be justified. It would not, therefore, be well for us to be so immersed in the devout contemplation of what is to come, as to lose sight of the precious opportunities of the time that now is ; and this might possibly be our temptation if the future scene were more clearly revealed. Even the heathen mythology, we remember, invests the deity who foretells future events with the power of making himself invisible.

Besides, the danger of familiarity has always to be

* Dean Plumptre's "Spirits in Prison," p. 7.

† This is the only explanation which can be given of the complete omission of all reference to the Intermediate State in the extant works of Richard Hooker and Bishop Andrewes. In the Ash Wednesday Sermons of the latter (No. 2) he describes the three "Ventura" of death, judgment, and hell-fire, awaiting the sinner. No mention is made whatever of any state intervening between the two former.

reckoned with in all that affects future life. Were we able to know all concerning the unseen world, we might become so accustomed to the revelation, as to lose the sense of blessed anticipation which our present uncertainty gives us. Moreover, the force of prohibition, which frequently keeps men back from doing evil because of a certain vague terror of its future consequences, would be neutralised if we possessed a full knowledge of these results in the life to come. Hence, on these accounts, both to prevent the sapping of the energies of present life, and to give a spur to the attainment of future bliss, God has kept in the background the vision which is awaiting sight and experience in the next world. Still, let us rest assured, that such revelation as we possess is sufficient for any knowledge we may need, and for any practical purpose to which we may require to turn it, in aid of life both now and hereafter.

Our first consideration will be, that *there is a state of definite existence between death and resurrection, continuous with present life, but distinct in itself* ; a state, moreover, which is both a truth of revelation, and a reasonable necessity of our being.

This state is to be regarded as *intermediate in time*, since it covers the interval between death and resurrection ; and *intermediate in essence*, since it marks a period and a condition of true life perfectly separate, and quite different, from that which either preceded, or will follow it.

Hence it follows that the Intermediate State marks a distinct epoch between the era of present life, and that great future which follows upon the Second Advent. It creates a pause, between the busy activity of this lower scene, and the uninterrupted repose of the celestial abode. It acts as a vestibule for the assembling of the multitudes who await a judgment to come. It relieves our being for a time from the incumbrance of the body of this flesh, from that "law of sin" which is in its members, and which is now "warring against the law of our mind" (Rom. vii. 25), and so renders us capable, without

such let or hindrance, of satisfying our highest spiritual aspirations.* It provides an opportunity for such apparelling and development of the spirit as God may mercifully allow, before the great door into the mansions of heaven is swung back on its hinges, and the blessed summons is received to "enter into the joy of the Lord."

Now, the revelation of God is clear with regard to the fact and subject of such a state of life existing between earth and the final heaven, although, it is only gradually, and very imperfectly that the veil of this unseen world is from time to time drawn aside for us. Thus the Old Testament view of Hades, as a gloomy prison-house, is first placed on the record of Holy Scripture. It is a dark dismal place (Job x. 21, 22) situated in the centre of the earth, and made fast with gates and bars (Job xxxiii. 28 ; xvii. 16) ; a home of oblivion where all things are forgotten (Ps. lxxxviii. 5, 12), and God even is unknown (Ps. cxv. 17) : presenting to such saints of old as David (Ps. vi. 5) and Hezekiah (Is. xxxviii. 18) no desirable expectation.† Hence the idea of an escape from this subterranean‡ realm is continually presenting itself to the mind of the devout Jew. David felt that it was impossible for God to leave his soul in such a place (Ps. xvi. 10) ; that deliverance must eventually be granted (Ps. xlix. 15), and the day of

*So Bishop Butler ("Analogy," part 1, chapter 1) :—"Death may immediately, in the natural course of things, put us into a higher and more enlarged state of life, as our birth does : a state in which our capacities, and sphere of perception and of action, may be much greater than at present. For as our relation to our external organs of sense renders us capable of existing in our present state of sensation : so it may be the only natural hindrance to our existing immediately, and, of course, in a higher state of reflection."

† "The writers of the Psalms know only of one single gathering-place of the dead in the depth of the earth, where they indeed live ; but it is only a *quasi* life, because they are secluded from the light of this world, and, what is the most lamentable, from the light of God's presence." (Delitzsch, Ps. vi. 6.)

‡ It is, perhaps, fanciful to define any exact position of Hades with regard to the earth's locality, nor need it be regarded as a matter of much moment ; relatively to heaven Hades is below, a descent (Eph. iv. 9, 10 ; Gen. xxxvii. 35) ; relatively to earth it is "outside."

awakening from such troubled sleep dawn (Ps. xvii. 15), when men now dead shall live, and they that dwell in the dust shall arise and sing (Is. xxvi. 19). God will indeed "ransom His chosen from the power of the grave" and "redeem them from death"; but, more than this, He will swallow up death in victory, and destruction shall come upon the grave (Hos. xiii. 14. Is. xxv. 8).

The change of name, from the ancient Sheol (Græce, Hades) to that which would seem to have been in use in the time of our Blessed Lord, viz., "Abraham's Bosom," points to further progress in the conception of the abode of the Dead. It suggests, according to the interpretation of the Parable in which it occurs, the idea of a separation after death taking place between good and evil, or perhaps, even between Jew and Gentile.* Sheol or Hades still exists, but the longed-for escape has been found, for the children of Abraham, into a separate home of bliss.

Another development in the idea of this Intermediate State is found in the name, "Paradise," given by our Blessed Lord to the future resting-home of souls. This conveys a figurative description of the place, as an abode of surpassing beauty, and points to a condition of felicitous rest and enjoyment awaiting all who are privileged to enter upon it. The penitent thief, on hearing the mention of Paradise, would recognise the contrast it presented to all the woeful surroundings of his position, and would picture a scene of repose and tranquil beauty, to be exchanged on that same day for "the place of a skull." Twice in the Revelation of God we are allowed a glimpse of this newly-revealed Garden of Eden,

* That such an idea of separation of Jew and Gentile after death should have prevailed, would be the natural and logical conclusion of the deep-rooted prejudice of the Jew, which formed the barrier between them. This idea, which was fostered especially in the time of the Captivity, was frequently rebuked (S. Matt. iii. 9, viii. 11; S. Luke xiii. 28, 29), and ultimately led to their rejection (Rom. viii. ix., x.). Moreover, that Christ in this Parable should have expanded the idea and marked the separation between Hades and Abraham's Bosom as one affecting the true and false children of Abraham, would be only in agreement with His teaching on other occasions.

once in order to follow Christ on His mission to the departed souls, and again to catch sight of S. Paul on the occasion of the blessed rapture he experienced in that fair land.*

One other description of this future state is to be found in the Vision of the Martyrs, under the altar, at the opening of the fifth seal (Rev. vi. 9). This points out the further idea, though dimly foreshadowed, of there being some relation of interest and sympathy in the Intermediate State between the living and departed. As "the murmur of the mighty sea of human sin and woe" penetrates their hallowed sanctuary of rest, it is represented how an intense yearning over their distressed brethren on earth is experienced, and a deep longing felt for the final consummation of all things, breaking forth in the passionate cry, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" †

We thus mark in these four names, "Sheol," "Abraham's Bosom," "Paradise," "Under the Altar," given to the locality of the Dead, the steps of a steady and distinct progress in the idea of their condition: the conception becoming clearer,

* The meaning of the word Paradise is that of a safely-walled garden or park enclosure, surrounding the palace or person of a king (see Gen. iii. 8; Rev. xxi. 22), and this would be the idea it conveyed to the mind of a Jew (see Smith's Dict., art. "Paradise," and 2 Esdras ii. 19), and accounts for the juxtaposition of Paradise and heaven (2 Cor. xii. 2-4, and Rev. ii. 7). It suggests the idea of security quite as much as that of beauty and joy.

Isaac Williams ("Passion," p. 320), speaking of the penitent thief as "the only one of all Christians of whom we are sure that he found an entrance there," seems to imply that Paradise points to the change wrought in the condition of the departed by Christ's Passion, and quotes two striking passages from S. Cyril of Jerusalem (Lect. xiii. 21) and S. Chrysostom (Expos. in Luc., lib. x. 121) in support of the idea that this Galilean robber was the first to enter the Paradise of God: even "before the faithful Abraham," "Moses and the Prophets," "before all the world, even before the Apostles." There is a strange irony and significance in the fact that the Devil, who cheated the first Adam of Eden, is cheated by the second Adam of the penitent thief when he was admitted into the new Garden of Eden.

† So Tertullian ("Scorpiace," c. 12):—"The souls of Martyrs repose in peace under the altar, and cherish a *spirit of patience*, until others are admitted to fill up their communion of glory." (See Bishop Wordsworth, *i. l.*, for this citation, and other Patristic references.)

and receiving more complete development as the revelation proceeds. This is, I need scarcely say, what we should expect, and is in perfect agreement with the Divine plan of revelation from beginning to end.

One point, however, must be carefully borne in mind, that although there is this gradual clearing of the vision of the Intermediate State: so that as its outline becomes more distinctly visible, it is seen to be more and more celestial in character: no approach is made in Holy Scripture to any confusion of idea between the Paradise of God, and the Heaven of His Immediate Presence.

Hence we read, "No man hath ascended into heaven"; * and, again, "Not that any man hath seen the Father"; † and, again, Christ says of Himself, after His return from Paradise on the resurrection morn, "I am not yet ascended." ‡ So, also, S. Peter, speaking of David on the day of Pentecost, declares § of him, though more than a thousand years after his death, "David is not ascended." And the distinction between the two states is even more specially noticeable in the account of S. Paul's raptures recorded || in the Epistle to the Corinthians, where first we read of that Apostle being caught up to the third heaven, without any mention of what happened to him there; and *afterwards*, of his being taken up into Paradise, where he heard strange words—words which he could not repeat when he came back to earth. ¶

Moreover, the reasonableness of this revelation of a future state of life between death and resurrection is attested by the

* S. John iii. 13. The translation of Elijah will always remain one of the unaccountable histories of Revelation. We cannot, however, contradict Christ's express words, or force them into any agreement with the idea of Elijah's ascension into heaven. Like his great Forerunner Moses, he quits the earth in mystery, and "no man knoweth his resting place until this day" (See Stanley's "Jewish Church," lect. xxxi.)

† S. John vi. 46.

‡ S. John xx. 17.

§ Acts ii. 34.

|| This idea of two raptures is confirmed by many of the Early Fathers, as Irenæus, Tertullian, Justin Martyr, &c., also Bishop Wordsworth, *i.l.* See also *Church Quarterly*, vol. xii., art. "Intermediate State."

¶ 2 Cor. xii. 2-4.

urgent necessity for such an interval of existence arising from the spiritual condition in which most men leave this world.

A German thinker* of some repute has written thus :—
 “All agree in saying that it is too violent to admit at once into heaven all those who only repented of their past evil life at the end, or who indulged too much in the sensualities of this life : since “nothing defiled” enters there ; also, it is too harsh to assign all such to eternal torments ;” an opinion, moreover, endorsed by our own personal knowledge and experience. For, looking on ourselves, both as we know and are known, we may well ask where is the fitness to enter at once into the celestial abode ? Conscience and Reason alike indicate a necessity, in the case of even the holiest of men, for some time of waiting, some place out of reach of sin and temptation, when and where the soul may establish a more perfect fitness to enter into the immediate presence of God.

But, it may be asked, what becomes of this necessity in the case of those who are alive upon earth in the day of Christ's Advent, and are allowed no such opportunity of meeting it ? To answer this question, we require fully to understand the meaning of Christ's 1,000 years' reign, and, moreover, the course of miraculous Providence which is continually at work in the world. As regards the latter, God no doubt holds in His Hand the solution of all such exceptional circumstances, and will have made provision in His Divine economy to meet the case of the “quick” in that day. Certainly, it cannot be urged, from their isolated case, that the countless millions of the predeceased may not have opportunities given them in their resting state to become better fitted for heaven.

Further, if the demand for an Intermediate State is thus reasonably supported by the imperfect spiritual condition in which death finds most men, an additional argument in its favour may be urged from the array of possibilities which the

* “Perrone de Deo Creatore,” part iii., c. 6, art. 2, p. 319, quoted by Dr. Pusey in “What is of Faith ?” p. 123.

prospect of such a state would hold out. Who can fail to be perplexed with the anomalies of life and of life's ending in many cases? A man is suddenly removed from this earth when he is just completing some great task to which he has devoted his entire life and energy. Another is cut off without being allowed to satisfy any of the deep aspirations of his soul. A third is held back from the greatness and honour which are his due, by some mental or physical infirmity. Here is one, chained to a bed of sickness, whilst ardently longing to be engaged in active work for God ; another, eager to develop his spiritual life, is shut off from all means of Divine grace. We need not pursue the point further. Only we would add that it is when brought face to face with such problems of present life we thankfully take refuge in the prospect of the Intermediate State. We conceive and find consolation in the conception that in this unseen existence, previous to resurrection and final judgment, there may be unfathomable possibilities to meet such cases : that in some mysterious way, the unfinished work of earth may be carried to its completion by the unseen hand which commenced it : that the unsatisfied longings of the deeply earnest soul may meet their full satisfaction : that the most sublime aspirations after perfection may be realised : that the longings for spiritual work and development may receive complete fulfilment. Who can say? and who can say otherwise? We find, at least, comfort in the thought and prospect of these possibilities, and they offer that almost necessary sequel to present life for which, otherwise, we should look in vain.

One further argument, for such a transition stage of life being allowed to souls between earth and heaven, satisfactory to reason, as well as in agreement with revelation, seems deducible from a passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews,* where it is written of the departed saints of the old covenant, "These all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise : God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."

* Hebrews xi. 39, 40.

From these words we conclude that God, in strict justice, places on an equality the souls of men in the enjoyment of future bliss. He will, on the one hand, allow of no advantage to be gained by any of the predeceased over those who remain behind on earth, nor on the other, as S. Paul* declares, shall "we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord prevent them that are asleep";† all, in fact, both quick and dead are to enter heaven together. It follows, therefore, that there must be a place where the souls which have quitted the scene of present life, will await the arrival of those who have still to follow, in order that this just and benevolent intention of God may have effect.‡

Thus we establish our first consideration, and cling to the prospect of the Intermediate State, as being one of the most priceless possessions of revelation which God has given to us, and as also satisfying the demands of our human reason. We agree that we cannot afford to remain in ignorance about this epoch of future life. The knowledge of the Intermediate State, both as a fact and a necessary fact, is, seemingly, a requirement of present existence, and we are thankful to conclude that we are neither mistaken nor unreasonable in proclaiming its truth, and in holding out the promise and possibility which such a state unfolds.

Our next consideration will be to show that *in the Intermediate State there is the continuation of life, a life of conscious existence, and perhaps, in some respects, a life more vividly conscious than that which we possess on this earth.*

Already this idea will have been started, by the reflection to which some of the names applied to this state of future existence must give rise: since, unless the names are unmeaning,

* R.V. "Shall in no wise precede them that are asleep."

† 1 Thess. iv. 15.

‡ Professor Westcott (Heb. xi. 40, p. 382) says as follows:—"The reason of the failure of the fathers to 'receive the promise,' which men think strange, lay in the far-reaching Providence—Foresight—of God. It was His purpose that the final consummation should be for all together, as indeed, it is of all, in Christ; so that no one part of the Body can, if we realise the meaning of the figure, gain its fulfilment independently."

a condition of unconscious life would be quite incompatible with such nomenclature. Thus "Abraham's Bosom," where Lazarus is seen gathered into the arms of the Great Father of the Faithful, suggests a conscious recognition of the patriarchal and covenant relationship which exists between God and His people.* Paradise, again, is indicative of a capacity to enter into the pleasures and glad sunshine of new surroundings, such as favour the development of all that is beautiful. So, also, the figurative expression, "under the altar," would entirely lose its force if the souls seen there did not really feel the longing for the "ampler day" which is expressed in the words found on their lips.

Still, more is requisite than the mere name of a locality to lead us to a right understanding of the life and character of its inhabitants, although often, as in the present instance, this may be an assistance in the matter.† We therefore need to inquire more particularly into the nature of the evidence there is for this conscious life of the departed, in those facts and histories about them, which are brought to our notice in Holy Scripture. The chain of testimony, drawn from this source, would appear to be very strong and conclusive.

Thus, we have Christ preaching His Gospel (ἐκκήρυξεν) ‡ to an audience of those who had been swept away by the deluge more than two thousand years previously, and who, we may reasonably presume, were able to comprehend His message; otherwise we should have to suppose that He was fruitlessly addressing those who were not in a condition to understand what He was saying.§ Again, when S. Paul was caught up

* Canon Mason's "Faith of the Gospel," 1st ed., p. 360.

† Bishop Woodford "Sermons," 2nd ed., vol. ii., sermon xi., p. 178, adopts the vice versa argument.

‡ See Bishop Wordsworth, *i. l.*

§ The descent of Christ into Hades, and the purpose of that descent, necessarily opens up many important considerations. The doctrine has been made an article of the Creed, though not found in the Nicæan symbol, nor in the ancient draughts of the Apostles' Creed, being first recited, according to Bishop Pearson, in the Church of Aquileia (*circa* A.D. 400). It forms the subject of our third Article of Religion. All the

into Paradise, he heard unspeakable words which it was not lawful for him to utter ; he found himself, in fact, in the midst of a conversation on subjects quite beyond our present know-

earlier Fathers of the Church, from Ignatius to Cyprian, and the later Fathers also *e.g.*, Cyril, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, Chrysostom, have accepted it as an article of the Faith. The importance of the doctrine, in the controversy either with the Arians or the Apollinarians who denied the existence of a rational soul in Christ, is, as Bishop Harold Browne (art. iii.) observes, "one principal reason why the Fathers laid such great stress" upon it. When we come, however, to investigate the place and purpose of the Descent, we find some division of opinion.

As regards Holy Scripture, there are four references to Christ's Descent into Hades, in Ephes. iv. 8, 9, Phil. ii. 9, 10, 1 S. Peter iii. 18-20, Rev. i. 18, besides the words of our Lord in S. Luke xxiii. 43. These form a fragmentary Gospel of the whole event (see Dean Plumptre, "Spirits in Prison," chap. iii., sec. ii.), which may be summed up as follows:—Christ, upon death, descended into the lower parts of the earth, and, having the keys of hell and of death, entered the prison in which He found in confinement the spirits of those who had disobeyed Noah's call and warning, and who had been carried away by the Deluge ; to these in captivity He proclaimed the message of redemption.

What the spiritual condition of these antediluvian souls was, previous to death, whether penitent or impenitent, we are not told : but the whole gist of Holy Scripture would lead us to infer that they must have previously found a *locus penitentiae*. The word, ἀνυθίσσας, refers evidently to a time previous to the preaching of Christ, and would seem to imply that they were *not* disobedient when He addressed them. (See "Speaker's Commentary," *i.l.* note.)

Hilary (Ps. cxix. 82) believes in the penitence of the antediluvian souls *previous to their death*, and in this view he is followed by many others, especially Bishop Horsley in his well-known sermon on the subject (vol. i., ser. xx.).

Most of the Early Fathers, Irenæus and Tertullian especially, held that the descent of Christ effected no change in the condition of the souls of the departed, but afterwards this view was modified, and *doubtfully* Clement of Alexandria, *certainly* Origen, propounded an opinion that Paradise, a better place than Hades, was henceforward opened to the souls of the just. (See Bishop Harold Browne, art. iii., for references.)

S. Augustine seems to have had a most uncertain mind on the whole subject, for at one time (De Genesi, ad literam l. xii. c. 33) we find him thinking that Christ went into the place of torment to save souls from thence, and at another (Epist. ad Evodium) denying the Descent altogether, and explaining the reference in S. Peter's Epistle as signifying the preaching of Christ in the spirit in the days of Noah.

S. Ambrose (De Fide ad Gratianum l. iv.) says of Christ :—"Solvit vincula inferni et piorum animas elevavit," as if he also understood the Descent to be into the jaws of hell, the place of the damned, though many think that by "vincula inferni" no more is meant than "Hades" itself.

Others, like S. Augustine, and notably John Calvin, have sought to explain away the doctrine. Still, as we should expect, there is an almost unanimous consent that the Descent actually took place, and that it conferred a distinct benefit upon this part of the unseen world.

For a most valuable catena of Patristic and other references on this doctrine, Bishop Pearson's Article should be read, though his statements on the general subject are sometimes very conflicting.

ledge, perhaps on the subject of some of those tremendous mysteries which baffle human understanding and are frequently a stumbling block to faith.* We know, moreover, that the rich man (assuming either that the parable of Dives and Lazarus is history, or, if otherwise, at least a true illustration of "substantial verities")† was able in Hades to see Abraham and Lazarus together, and to express to the former solicitude for those whom he had left behind in the world. Further, we are led to believe that the souls of the departed must have some notion of the lapse of time, and feel themselves to be in a state of imperfect happiness, and so, from beneath the altar, conscious of the future in suspense, and almost

* This is a most useful instance to cite in favour of actual consciousness separate from bodily sense. S. Paul expressly says that he could not tell whether he was "in the body or out of the body," *i.e.*, he had no consciousness of his body either way. And yet he was clearly conscious of himself; he knew himself to be in existence, and could exercise the faculties both of hearing and seeing, although he could give no further explanation of his circumstances at the time. The soul, therefore, when separated from the body is here seen to retain all its powers of perception.

The doubt, moreover, in S. Paul's mind, as to whether he were disembodied or not, proves that he was not in what we understand by a mere trance, since for this the body and soul would consciously remain united. (See Dr. Milligan's "Resurrection," lect. iii., p. 86, and Bishop Wordsworth, *i.l.*)

† S. Gregory in his well-known Epistle to Leander, Bishop of Seville, wrote as follows on the subject of Holy Scripture:—"Be it known that there are some parts which we go through in an historical exposition, some we trace out in allegory, upon an investigation of the typical meaning, some we open in the lessons of moral teaching alone, while there are some few which, with more particular care, we search out in all these ways together, exploring them in a threefold method." Perhaps, there is no passage in the Bible to which this last sentence is more applicable than the Parable of Dives and Lazarus.

Some of the Fathers have regarded the Parable as an account of true history: (See Suicer's Thesaurus, "*Λάζαρος*," *cf.* Cyril; p. 357), and certainly from examination of its circumstantial details, there is all the appearance of such being the case. Others have viewed it as a beautiful allegory, typical of what will take place immediately upon death. A third body of commentators regard it ethically, as an instruction on the morality of the age, and a warning against selfishness. The true interpretation is probably that which combines "the threefold method," and regards the Parable as a true history, figuratively expressed, and intended to convey a deep moral and spiritual lesson of life. Throughout the Essay we wish to regard it in this manner, and as such, it is unnecessary to say, it proves a most valuable addition to the revelation of the Intermediate State. It is noticeable that in Holy Scripture it does not bear the name of parable.

impatiently measuring the length of its delay, we hear their cry, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"* Again, when Jesus Christ entered Paradise, not only did He find distinct work to do there, but from His words to the penitent thief on the Cross we conclude that the latter would have the conscious enjoyment of His Presence.† In support of this same contention we find our Blessed Lord speaking to the Sadducees, who denied all spirit existence,‡ and reminding them that God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, adding with emphasis, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."§ On another occasion He draws a clear distinction between persons who had power to kill the body, but were not able at the same time to kill the soul; in other words, He indicates that when the body is killed the soul is still living.|| So, too, we have S. Stephen praying with his latest and truest breath, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,"¶ but we cannot imagine that he was asking God to receive that which had no existence, or even to accept that which was perfectly helpless, useless, and unconscious, rather, we more naturally believe, that he was commending to God a living conscious soul in the same way as his Master before him had done when He died on the Cross.** Once more S. Paul tells of "a desire to depart and to be with Christ"; †† and again, of his willingness "to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord"; ‡‡ both expressions clearly proving, that in his own mind life did not end on earth, but was consciously continued with Christ within the veil.

But, perhaps, it is objected here that in many other

* Rev. vi. 10, 11.

† "To-day thou shalt be *with Me* in Paradise." (S. Luke xxiii. 43.)
 "Instead of the mere remembrance, perfect fellowship and communion is promised." (Stier's "Words of the Lord Jesus," vol. vii., p. 446.)

‡ Acts xxiii. 8. § S. Matthew xxii. 23.

|| S. Matthew x. 28. See Bishop Wordsworth, *i.l.*

¶ Acts vii. 59. ** S. Luke xxiii. 46. †† Phil. i. 23. ‡‡ 2 Cor. v. 8.

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instances revelation regards the condition of those in the Intermediate State as being a condition of *sleep*. It is quite true that this is the case, and, moreover, that it is our Blessed Lord Himself who speaks in this way. Thus, He says of Jairus' daughter, "The maid is not dead, but sleepeth;"* and again of Lazarus, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth;"† also, if it is held that the scene of the Parable of the Ten Virgins is laid in the Intermediate State,‡ we have this expression, "they all slumbered and slept,"§ as defining the condition of the souls who are waiting for the Second Advent. A simple answer, however, is found to any objection on this ground in the word itself; for sleep does not imply unconsciousness, but *insensibility*. We do not, of course, in sleep experience ordinary sensations, as we do when we are awake, but, without these, we can still be conscious, and in our dreams we have evidence that this is really the case.|| Besides, S. Paul condemns the notion of the soul's unconsciousness in the enjoyment of the sleep of Paradise, when he says, "Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him."¶ Surely this does not mean that God will bring with Him spirits in a swoon and dead to all consciousness, but rather spirits in conscious life, capable of knowing and appreciating what is being done for them. The idea of sleep is of course attached to the condition of the soul after death in order to emphasise the life of rest which is then enjoyed. Not, indeed, the rest of inaction, nor the repose of idleness, but, rather, the religious rest—a rest in God—a Sabbath rest (σαββατισμός, Heb. iv. 9)—a rest from the toil and conflict of this world—the rest of a full, free, and energising life.

But it may be still objected, that if the souls of the departed

* S. Matthew ix. 24. † S. John xi. 11.

‡ Hilary explains they all slumbered and slept as meaning, "they fell asleep in death." See Bishop Wordsworth, *i. l.*

§ S. Matthew xxv. 5.

|| Hamilton (Lectures on "Metaphysics") states that even when the body is wrapped in deepest slumber the mind is ever awake and active.

¶ 1 Thess. iv. 14.

are *not* asleep what can the sounding of the trumpet* mean, which is to usher in their resurrection? Surely this must be necessary because they are asleep and require to be awakened! Again we have our answer ready to hand. The Scripture use of the trumpet is never for the purpose of awaking out of sleep, but always as a summons to an assembly, or to sound the note of triumph or of alarm, or to give some other distinct notice.† We conclude, therefore, that the term sleep or slumber, used with reference to that state of future life when the present occupations of the body have ceased, and the mere earthly sensations of the soul are no more experienced, does not imply a state of unconsciousness, and that there is no support of such an idea to be found in Holy Scripture. Whereas, on the other hand, we contend that there is much which tells us of a perfectly conscious life in that state—of a free play exercised by the memory and affections, of the secret enjoyment of the Saviour's presence, of a capacity to listen to and be benefited by the Saviour's word, of a blessed repose from earthly labour and strain, consciously experienced, and contributing to make the Intermediate State a second *Paradise*—a foretaste of that eternal Sabbath which, following the great Resurrection, "will remain for the people of God."

Death, therefore, is not to be regarded as breaking the thread of conscious life. Death, rather, marks the division between its first and second epochs, and life after death is simply the entrance upon another scene where its story is continued under different circumstances. The same also is true of life after the Resurrection. That stupendous event must never be regarded as though it were a second creation of life, and as if the first earthly birth had come to its end; but, rather, that the life begun on earth, and continued in Paradise, here reaches its third and final manifestation.‡

* 1 Cor. xv. 52; S. Matt. xxiv. 31; and 1 Thess. iv. 16.

† Ps. lxxxi. 3; Jer. iv. 5; Ezek. xxxiii. 3; Hos. v. 8; Joel ii. 1, 15, &c.

‡ See Bishop Martensen's "Christian Dogmatics," p. 461, Clark's Library, 1880; also Dr. Milligan's "Resurrection of our Lord," and Professor Westcott's summary of the "fact" in his "Gospel of the Resurrection," p. 156-157.

Besides, it is only when we grasp this thought of life's conscious continuance, that we fully understand what it is to live at all. The magnificent gift of existence is not bestowed, as though it were some treasure for use in present time, which will have to be yielded up when the breath leaves the human body. It has an eternal force. It is immortal.

Moreover, we are better able, when we view life in this close and abiding connection, to discern its true significance and meaning in each of its three different stages and conditions.*

Thus, *in time*, the body, which is the outward organ of man's present being, determines to a very great extent the character of life's manifestation. The hand that moves, the ear that listens, the eye that beholds, the foot that walks, the brain that works, these members of the human body constitute themselves a ministry of service for fashioning the life that now is into its settled expression, and stamp it with a character which will to a great extent survive through all its stages. In fact the importance of the body in life's present career cannot be too strongly enforced. A disregard for its solemn function, as though of little consequence, must lead to irreparable mischief. We have evidence of this on all sides. The common spectacle of utter recklessness about the body's welfare, the needless risks of its fortunes which are run, the complete neglect of common laws of health, the ease with which men fall into the snares of multiplied work, and become a prey to the inevitable result of over-pressure and strain, these bear a sad and abundant witness to the irretrievable mistakes of which thousands in the great factory of the world are guilty every day. Or, looking at the subject from another point of view, who can exaggerate the injury which is done through want of bodily self-restraint in the matter of appetite, either innocent or sinful? Does not

* I have thought it better, in this part of the Essay, to keep to the common (dual) division of man's being into body and soul. We have reason below more exactly to define the constitution of man.

an age of luxury cripple life in its best sense, destroy its beauty, defeat its high and noble purpose, and emasculate it of much of its true force?

So that what we need to recognise, what we require to believe, is, that the body we now possess becomes a determining factor of future existence, settling to a very great extent the character of the life that will follow afterwards.

Again, let us look for a moment over the gap of the Intermediate State, and fix our attention on the vast eternal life beyond, when the body shall be resumed by the miracle of resurrection. Judging from the brief page of history which gives account of the Risen Lord, and adding to it such glimpses of the post-resurrection life as we find in the Bible, we see the continuation of a multiplied and sanctified order of bodily ministries. The hands and feet, the eyes and ears, the brain, enter upon a new and sublime series of performances. The countless services of love and worship, the uninterrupted visions of transcendent glory, the strains of rapturous song, thoughts of new and loftiest understanding, seem to necessitate for their enjoyment and exercise this renewal of bodily organs. Nor is this all. The soul of man, which has then to enter on its final stage of existence, must needs possess a fitness for this further development of life. It cannot be thought that in the day of final bliss souls will be found unequal to its enjoyment and felicity, or, that when the expanding vision of God in all its amazing and unutterable splendour shall be spread out to view, they will be incapable of beholding it, and be compelled to hide their eyes from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, like the wicked in the day of Christ's Advent.* This assuredly would be to make heaven an intolerable state, and require us to imagine that the future will be misery instead of bliss.

But, if this be true, that the soul requires a special fitness for the entrance upon the beatific vision, there must then follow a most serious question : when and how is such fitness

* Rev. vi. 15-17.

to be secured? Already we have stated that but few of those who die seem to be in any such state of preparation for the future, unless, indeed, we may imagine a miracle of grace to have been performed at the instant of death. But, as such a sudden transformation is hardly reasonable, nor in agreement with all the known principles of Divine dealing, are we bound therefore to accept the terrible alternative of life's wholesale failure, and to confess that the greater number of mankind will be lost eternally? This at least is the only logical conclusion before us. And yet what an issue of life! Who can face it with any calmness? It were mockery, indeed, to thank God for creation with such an end in view for the majority of human souls! Besides, we should be compelled to proclaim for God an almost universal defeat, and thereby magnify Satan into a conquering monarch, and invest him with an almightiness above that of God.

It is then, in this intense perplexity about the issues of the future, which has driven thousands, we fear, to find a refuge in blank atheism, that the fact of a conscious life in the Intermediate State comes to our rescue. For by its revelation, we discover a legitimate and reasonable escape from a conclusion worse than any Calvinism, and are able thankfully to behold a vista of hope stretched before us in the interval between death and resurrection.

But here we need to anticipate an objection that will at once suggest itself. When we open such a door to the possibilities of a conscious life in the Intermediate State, let it be clearly understood, that we are not urging any plea for a second chance being given to souls there, on the assumption that their first spiritual opportunity here was not embraced.*

* Throughout this Essay no mention whatever will be made, for clear and obvious reasons, of the condition of the impenitent and wicked after death. It does not come within the scope of our subject, since we are only dealing with the Intermediate State in its relation to known and authorised prayer, and therefore it falls outside the limits of our consideration. Still, we should be lacking in candour if a note were not made to this effect. The future of those who have wilfully denied Christ, opening up other kindred subjects of annihilation and of conditional immortality on the one hand, and on the other of eternal hope and

The two divisions of life, here and hereafter, are so entirely distinct, that the opportunities of the future state can never be regarded altogether as a substitute for the opportunities of the present, although, to a certain extent they are supplementary. Hence, whatever opportunities be mercifully allowed in another state, of continuing the soul's preparation and fitness for the immediate Presence of God, they can only be those which will mark a progression from the opportunities already given and accepted on earth. It would be, as one has said, "to evacuate present life of all meaning" if we were "to look upon a man's life in this world as a useless thing which might be cast away in order that he might begin afresh." Besides, such an idea would disturb the continuity of life, on which we lay very great stress.

Further, if it be urged that present life is not a heritage from which we can free ourselves, and that there is a law of cause and consequence which governs the life as a whole, so that, should it not be worked out here, it remains to be done hereafter: then, I take it, no one will be so foolish as to think that he can ignore the responsibilities of present life, in the hope that he may redeem them in the life to come. Each division of human existence, be it remembered, presents life under different conditions. Our present condition of life in the body can never repeat itself, in such a way that the deeds of such life in the body will have a stage for a second performance. And therefore, whatever be the prospects and possibilities of the life in the Intermediate State, we must regard them as quite different from any which have hitherto been experienced.

universal salvation, must stand by itself, and demands separate treatment. It is without doubt the most difficult subject of eschatology, and calls for most careful consideration in the present day. We, however, are released from this obligation, since we shall presently see that there is no authority whatever which can be claimed for prayer on behalf of those who have died in the spirit of antichrist (*cf.* 1 S. John v. 16). It is, however, important to notice that, whilst in our prayers and aspirations for the departed we pray for them as "those departed in God's faith and fear," we still leave to God alone the absolute knowledge of those who have so departed. WE have not such knowledge, and are incapable of distinguishing between the penitent and impenitent. WE cannot judge anything "before the time until the *Lord* come."

So far, then, we have seen that consciousness, in the Intermediate State, is in agreement with revelation, and moreover that it seems a necessary consequence and outcome of the life in that future state, if, in view of a resurrection afterwards, it is to be of any service to the spirit of man.

It will be necessary further to consider this requisite of consciousness in its relation to reasonable and intelligible conception.

And here it is important that we should consider carefully the constitution of man, in order to determine, what is of the nature of essence, in the matter of his being.

Now, the component elements in man's constitution are, according to the fundamental division of Holy Scripture (1 Thess. v. 23), body, soul, and spirit, a trinity of being foreshadowed in the truth that man is "made" in the Image of God (Gen. i. 26), or even, more exactly, that man "is the Image" of God (1 Cor. xi. 7). Not, indeed, that man is possessed of a threefold personality. In the Godhead there is the Person of the Father, the Person of the Son, and the Person of the Holy Ghost. Man, however, is but one person, and in this sense, his Divine archetype is the Second Person in the Holy Trinity, whilst the likeness of his being to the Father and the Holy Ghost is a mediate one; so that, as has been pointed out, "the likeness of God the Father and of God the Holy Ghost is impressed through God the Son."*

Now, it is scarcely necessary to state that the real *ego* of the man, "the seat of his existence," is the spirit (*πνεῦμα*), whereby he establishes a relation with the unseen, and "has affinity with God." What this self really is, must remain the inexplicable mystery of man's being.†

* Jeaffreson's "Divine Unity and Trinity," p. 244.

Bishop Martensen ("Christian Dogmatics," sec. 75) describes the Christian belief to be "that when God created man after His own Image, He created him in the Image of His Son, who was to become incarnate, so that even at the creation of man the Image of Christ was present to the mind of the Creator, and was the Prototype according to which man was created."

† In granting that the essence of the spirit is unknown, we should bear in mind the reservation of Hermann Lotze ("Microcosmus," book ii., chap. ii., p. 190):—"We do so only in a sense that includes the impossi-

How, again, this self found its origin, is the question which will always divide the Traducian and Creatian schools,* unless we return to the Platonic theory of metempsychosis, characterised by S. Peter of Alexandria as a "shred of heathenism" (*μάθημα τῆς ἑλληνικῆς φιλοσοφίας*), and condemned by the Second Council of Constantinople as "an untenable error."†

It is by this spirit, that the continuity of the human person through the different stages of life is preserved, and, although in nature it is invisible, as, in fact, God Himself is invisible, its presence becomes manifested in certain moral and intellectual qualities, as well as by visible corporeal activities : and, in fact, it is only in this way, that we can become acquainted with what the spirit really is. The spirit is known by the phenomena of soul and body.

Secondly, the soul (*ψυχή*), or, as it is quite as frequently called, mind, the seat of the intellect, of reason, and of moral judgment, is that part of the human constitution which thinks, and therefore manifests the spirit in the sphere of idea, memory, and reflection.‡ Thus, the spirit and the soul (or mind) seem inseparable and co-existing, although they are also distinct. For the spirit is essence, and the mind is the representation of essence, and, as has been said, "represent the essence of things as we will in thought, the representation is never more than the mere image of the thing."

bility of saying what would be the essence of anything in the entire absence of the conditions that are the exciting occasion of its manifestations."

* "The soul" (*scil.* spirit) "originates neither in the body nor in nothing ; it goes forth from the substance of the Infinite with no less fulness of reality than all actual Nature brought forth from the same source. Neither do soul and body come together by chance, nor is it the work of the body by its organisation to make to itself a soul corresponding to the possible form of its vital activity" (Lotze's "Microcosmus," book ii., chap. v., p. 391).

† See Canon Liddon, "Some Elements of Religion," p. 97, for references.

‡ Lotze points this out in saying : "We cannot make mind equivalent to the infinitive *to think*, but feel that it must be *that which thinks*; the essence of things cannot be either existence or activity, it must be *that which exists* and *that which acts*."

Thirdly, the body (*σῶμα*) is the external mechanism of the spirit and soul. There are students of human nature who hold the opinion that, essentially, the body is force, not matter, and so mark the distinction between body and flesh* (*σῶμα* and *σάρξ*).

Be this the case or not, so far as our observation goes, a body of some sort is necessary to the manifestation of the life of the spirit, and we should find it difficult to conceive of perfect human existence apart from this, its external mechanism.

If, however, some such bodily organism be necessary to discharge the functions of spirit, to be, perhaps, its vehicle of movement, its limb of activity, its phenomenon of life, then even more clearly, would it seem that mind and body must coexist. For,—steering safely through that materialistic view which tends to shipwreck man's true constitution, by making no distinction between mind and body, and, by so doing, as has been said, if not involving the denial, at least becoming opposed to the admission of any distinctive spiritual element or principle in our being—we cannot close our eyes to the truth that cerebral action and mental function seem bound up together and inseparably united.

We therefore sum up with a conclusion which may be correct, and which certainly fits in with all that we know of human constitution; that body, soul, and spirit are inseparable: and that, wherever man is, there he is to be found in this threefold and complete analysis of his being.

* Thus Jeaffreson's "Divine Unity and Trinity," p. 247 :—"The depth of man's being (or spirit) is manifested in his soul, but the manifestation of it to the world needs a power which intervenes between the moral and intellectual sphere of the soul and the external universe upon which the soul is to work. I propose to assign to this power the name of body, and thus to distinguish between the body and the flesh."

Lotze seems to have a similar idea in his mind: when speaking of the corruption that consumes the dead body, he adds, "nothing but the predominance of a higher force during life, keeps the constituent elements (*i.e.*, of the body) duly mixed, and presents the actions of the mutual affinities, by which, after death, they pass into far other and simpler kinds of composition" (chap. iii., "The Basis of Life," esp. pp. 51, 52).

Jeaffreson again ably argues his opinion in chap. ii. of his 4th Essay, entitled "The Body and the Flesh."

But if this be a true conclusion, it has a most important bearing upon the subject of our Essay.

One chief difficulty to be overcome in the conception of a conscious life in the Intermediate State, arises from its being supposed to be *incorporeal*. The force of this objection is perhaps more intelligible than consistent. We cannot properly conceive pure spirit becoming localised. And yet apart from place we cannot conceive anything at all. It is probable that we do not feel the difficulty about the angels; we can believe them to be consciously living, even although we have no authority for thinking that they are always clothed with a body such as we are familiar with. And yet there are frequent occasions where we read that the appearance of an angel even becomes visible.* Then, as a matter of course, a certain corporeity is assumed, since, otherwise, the angel could not have been seen. Still, we do not advance these exceptional visions of angels as an argument for assuming that they must have bodies permanently, or that their life would be no life at all, unless it were expressed thus in some bodily form.

But, leaving this consideration, which is a purely speculative one, are we perfectly certain that the assumption of an incorporeal existence in the Intermediate State is a true one?

For instance, it is certain that occasionally, for distinct purposes and under special circumstances, the departed have been allowed to revisit this earth: and then, in bodily form. Thus, on the day of Christ's Resurrection, we read how "many bodies of the saints which slept arose and came out of the graves, and went into the holy city and appeared unto many." † Moses, again, fourteen centuries after his death, was visible to S. Peter on the Mount of Transfiguration. ‡ Samuel, also, came up from Sheol, and made himself recognisable to Saul and the witch of Endor.§ We are quite willing to confess that such appearances were unusual, and that they were

* Ezek. i. 26. Dan. viii. 15, x. 18. S. Luke xxiv. 4-23.

† S. Matthew xxvii. 52, 53. ‡ S. Matthew xvii. 3. § 1 Samuel xxviii.

connected with a special purpose, a purpose, moreover, distinctly Divine, and for the discharge of a mission which no resident of the earth could have undertaken. Still, we are too jealous for the credit of these histories to allow them to be placed in the category of mere ghost stories. And therefore we believe that these, at least, are instances of some who once lived on earth returning to it in a bodily form, and we assert that there is nothing to show that this body was assumed simply for the one special occasion, and for an isolated manifestation. That the idea of some spirit-form or soul-sheath, capable of taking corporeal shape has existed from very early times, is quite certain.*

* I am indebted to Dr. Pope, of Oxford, for the following translation of a question and answer in one of the text-books of the *Çaiva-Çiddhanta* (South Indian) philosophers, who speak of a *Çūkshma-Çarīram*, or "subtile body":—

"What is the subtile body?

A body made up of the pure rudimental, causal (Proto-typal) organs of hearing, touch, sight, taste, and smelling (the *Īśā* of these), with the three internal organs of mind, sense, and self-consciousness: these eight.

It is distinct for each separate soul.

It is the means by which the soul has experience of the external world.

It is the instrument by which the soul, at the end of any one state of embodiment, passes to another such state."

Dr. Pope adds the following notes upon the passage:—

"1. This sheath is given by the Supreme once for all to each soul.

2. As an investiture, it remains unchangeable, through every migration of the soul, into (1) human, (2) divine (*i.e.*, heavenly, such as *Indraek* *), (3) bestial, (4) birdlike, (5) insect, or (6) fish, or (7) vegetable † organisms.

3. Its organs only act, I infer, during an interregnum.

4. I believe it remains even in the state of final emancipation.

5. Hence the soul is not only essentially immortal, but also has immortal faculties for experiencing pleasure, pain, &c."

Many hold the belief (purely speculative of course), that all souls, from the time of creation, are clothed in some form, immaterial and invisible to mortal eye, but which is the constant companion of the spirit of man in its career through time and eternity: and, moreover, that this unseen form becomes to a great extent identical with the body, bearing its image, and receiving its constant and varying impression.

For an interesting treatise on this subject see "Out of the Body," by J. S. Pollock, and especially the chapter on "Spirit Groups." The following statement of this idea is found in Cudworth's "Intellectual System of the Universe," chap. v., p. 806 (ed. 1678). "Even here, in this life, our body is as it were twofold, exterior and interior, we having, besides the grossly tangible bulk of our outward body, another interior

* Or Demoniācal.

† Seven states, through which the soul may pass in infinite succession.

We find more or less doubtful traces of it in Holy Scripture. Thus, when S. Peter, after his miraculous release from prison, was heard knocking at the door, and the damsel Rhoda told the inmates of the house that he was seeking admission, the idea suggested itself quite naturally to them that it was his angel; and, again, when the disciples saw Jesus walking on the sea: although they could not think it possible that it was Christ Himself, they had no hesitation in saying that it was His spirit. Nor have there been wanting indications of such a belief since Apostolic days. Irenæus, for instance, states that "the Lord with very great fulness taught that souls not only continue to exist not passing from body to body, but also that they preserve the

spiritual body, the soul's immediate instrument both of sense and emotion, which latter is not put into the grave with the other, nor imprisoned under the cold sods."

Earle also, in his treatise on the spiritual body says:—"There is even now in each of us a natural body, which at last will rise from the grave of the natural body like a germ from its perisperm, at the moment of death, and will preserve the identity of the former body under altered circumstances."

The same writer, in the "Christian Apologist," July 1876, also asserts: "We have actual promises dictated by the Holy Ghost to the effect that when this mortal tenement is destroyed, the spirit will find itself a dweller in a lighter and better mansion, a house not of clay, not of that grosser matter which we now animate, but of ethereal structure finer than the viewless air. . . . There is no need of looking forward through a long vista of ages to the time when this planet shall have run its destined course. . . . as the bourne at which we shall arrive before we shall attain that corporeity which the Scriptures predict. It will be ours from the moment when the heart ceases to beat, and we shall scarcely close the natural eyelids before the spirit vision will be awakened elsewhere."

As far as this is only a description of corporeity in the Intermediate State, we should find no difficulty in accepting it. Earle, however, seems to have asserted this as his view also of the Resurrection Body, and here we cannot follow him. Moreover, he thus seems to be identified with the teaching of Emanuel Swedenborg.

The Resurrection Body, though it be a spiritual body, is to be regarded as a body of flesh. Thus our fourth Article of Religion correctly teaches that "Christ did truly rise again from death and took again His Body with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature," and so is in agreement with our Baptismal Creed: "I believe in the Resurrection of the Flesh." The Greek, Bishop Pearson says (art. xi., par. 371, notes 1. 2.) "always *σαρκὸς ἀνάστασις*," the Latin "carnis resurrectionem;" and of the original text of the Apostles' Creed, Rufinus declares "nos dicimus *huius* carnis resurrectionem" (Ruffin Apol. l. i.)

It is scarcely within the scope of the Essay to consider the nature of the flesh in the resurrection body, but the subject is ably handled by Jeaffreson in his chapter on the resurrection.

same form (in their separate state) as their body had to which they were previously adapted, and that they remember the deeds which they did in that state of existence.”* And, again, Bishop Bull† suggests that the disembodied soul may be able to perceive “by the help of some new subtler organs and instruments fitted to its present state, which, either by its own native power given in its creation, it forms to itself, or by a special act of the Divine power, it is supplied with.” It may be that this idea of spirit form is to be regarded as akin to that which S. Paul calls the “Resurrection body,”‡ though it would appear, that this latter body is to be thought of as a new reality, and something very different from pure ethereal form.§ Reference to it, again, is perhaps made (i) in the present of “white robes,”|| given to pacify the souls beneath the altar, as something to cover the body, and as a compensation for the long waiting; or (ii) in that striking passage in the Epistle to the Corinthians, where S. Paul says, “we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved,” that is to say, at our death, “we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this” (building) “we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.”¶

* Book ii., c. xxxiv., sec. 1. Origen, again, and other ancients entertained the same opinion of souls being clothed after death with a certain thin and subtle body.

† In considering the middle state of happiness or misery, vol. i., sermon 3, quoted by Canon Luckock in “After Death,” p. 34.

‡ 1 Cor. xv. 37, 38, 44.

§ See “The Unseen Universe,” 1875, p. 162; and also below.

|| Rev. vi. 11, vii. 9, 13, 14.

¶ 2 Cor. v. 1-4. The Apostle, in this anticipation of a bodily frame in the after life, is clearly making no reference to his resurrection body, since he is looking to receive this new body at the time of his death. Whereas from another passage (1 Cor. xv.) we learn that he does not expect the latter until the end of the world.

There is just a single passage (Heb. xii. 23) which might be thought to militate against this contention for a body in the Intermediate State, where in that series of present relations which exist between ourselves on earth and the spirit universe, the departed saints are spoken of as spirits (*πνεύματα*) in a disembodied state. The context of the passage requires, I need hardly say, this view of their condition, but it would be hard to force any general conclusions from it, especially against the evidence of Holy Scripture on the contrary side.

Again, the necessity for bodily form in the Intermediate State seems to be implied in the fact of *recognition* which in this state revelation clearly establishes as possible, though not inevitable. Thus, as we have already noticed, Moses and Elias were recognised by the three disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration,* and the appearance of Samuel was identified by Saul and the witch of Endor.† Christ, again, holds out the prospect of this recognition to the penitent thief, in the words, "Thou shalt be with *Me*."‡ David's saying of Bathsheba's child, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me,"§ supports the same idea. We should also add the passage referring to Isaiah's vision,|| where Hades is moved to *meet* the King of Babylon at his coming; and also remember the word of advice given by Christ in the Parable of the Unjust Steward,¶ that we should make friends with the mammon of unrighteousness, *i.e.*, with our money, so that when we fail (literally are eclipsed, *i.e.*, die**), such friends will welcome and receive us into everlasting habitations, a reception which would hardly be intelligible, if not accompanied by recognition.††

How, we ask, could such recognition be possible to purely spirit existences? Whereas if some body, perpetuating the image and identity of any given human being, is still possessed in the Intermediate State, then all difficulty is removed, so that the fact that it is necessary for this purpose, becomes a further and a reasonable argument in its favour.

The only possible objection that might be raised against the possession of such a body in the Intermediate State, is that it might appear to be an interference with the doctrine of the Resurrection, and evacuate it of its true meaning. We do not, however, see how this could be possible: since the Body

* S. Matt. xvii. 3. † 1 Sam. xxviii. 14.

‡ S. Luke xxiii. 43, μετ' ἑμοῦ. See above for the force of the Greek preposition.

§ 2 Sam. xii. 23. || Is. xiv. 9. Comp. Ezek. xxxi. 16. ¶ S. Luke xvi. 9.

** R.V. adopts another Ms. reading—it (*i.e.*, the money) shall fail.

†† See a useful note of Wordsworth's on Ezek. xxxi. 16.

of the Resurrection is quite different from that of which we are now speaking, being, as we have already observed, a new reality, and something quite distinct from purely ethereal form.

We therefore venture to conclude that it is likely, that those who are in the Intermediate State are not entirely disembodied, although the frame in which their spirit is enshrined may be of a very subtle nature, and, that through being possessed of this bodily vestment, they are able to see visions, hear words, hold communications, offer prayers, and engage in such other activities as require some external organism for their manifestation.

In this contention for a body of some sort in the Intermediate State, we are not, it should be observed, only contending for the *existence* of the human being, but also for the *form of the existence*. We think it likely that man's compound constitution of body, soul, and spirit may always require some body. Otherwise we should have to solve a much more difficult problem of the divisibility of human being, and should be obliged to break up man's original unity of constitution, and so mar his unity of consciousness.* Perhaps it may be, as Bishop Butler observes, "as easy to conceive that we may exist out of bodies as in them." It certainly is, as he continues to say, "as easy to conceive that we might have animated bodies of any other organs and sense wholly different from these now given us, and that we may hereafter animate these new bodies, variously modified and organised, as to conceive how we can animate such bodies as our present."†

Moreover, although the possession of a body is not necessary in forming a conception of conscious life, as we know in the case of God Himself, still, it is a great aid to such conception, as every form of idolatry would teach. And to be able to think of the life of the spirit in the Intermediate State, manifested through some mechanical organism, is, undoubt-

* See Lotze's "Microcosmus," book ii., chap. i., p. 152.

† "Anal," part i., chap. i., p. 19.

edly, a gain to the imagination, and an assistance to our idea of its consciousness.

We have previously said that it is probable that life beyond this world may be even more vividly conscious than it is now : and this, perhaps, is the true meaning and significance of that first conscious awaking of Dives in the Parable, expressed in the words, "in Hades he lifted up his eyes." It is as if, at the moment of entering the unseen abode, a new and special realisation of his existence possessed him. By a sort of instantaneous flash, the truth of his own being—his separate life, the truth of his past and of his present—dawns upon him ; it may also have been the truth of God and of eternity. "He lifted up his eyes:" and amazement, mingled with terror, would accompany the vision. "He lifted up his eyes," as though hitherto he had been blind to everything but his own selfish interest, his purple and fine linen, his sumptuous fare : blind to all future possibilities, blind to all visions of woe, blind to the immortality of his soul, blind to the retribution of God. The truth comes as the scales fall, and, whilst separated from all previous happy temporal circumstances, he, perhaps for the first time, becomes aware of his own existence.* I mention this, more especially to show, that the dawn of consciousness hereafter will involve *mental activity*.

It will often have been asked by the inquiring mind how it is possible, if the Intermediate State be one of conscious life, to be in any sense happy in it, and especially if we are to be idle there. This, however, does not seem to be the case. Our reasoning faculties, at least, are shown in the parable to remain in active force ; and an appeal for their exercise is made in the words "Son, remember." Dives is quite capable of casting back his mind's eye over the incidents of his past life ; he can conjure up the vision of his luxurious home on earth, and of his daintily-spread table ; there had been no cancelling of his memory.

* Comp. 1 Cor. xiii. 12. Comp. S. Luke xii. 19. See a striking Sermon by Canon Liddon, Advent Series No. 2, "The first five minutes after death."

A further Scripture illustration of such mental activity is found in the instance of the martyred souls beneath the Altar. They are spoken of as still able to carry on their ministry of intercession and sympathy, and as solicitous about their protracted sojourn in that state. They are therefore capable of measuring the lapse of time.

In what we have said, also, on the subject of future recognition, we have anticipated evidence of this same mental capacity.

Hence we conclude, that consciousness, hereafter, will centre round a mentally active life. Memory, aspiration, solicitude, intercession, and all the different exercises and occupations of the human mind will have an enlarged scope given them. Passionate prayer will ascend incessantly to God, for each human tie left on earth.* Contrition may be experienced in a way that would now be impossible. The soul is set free to give expression to its deepest longing, and the remembrance of the past will be reflected with a vivid reality that can make it almost possible, in thought, to live over again the earthly life of past experience.

We have thus attempted to establish a complete and intelligible picture of the conscious life of man in the Intermediate State, and we conceive that he may be contemplated as in possession of a body, and still gifted with the full powers of his soul; so that his spirit is able to manifest itself in the fulness of being, and to preserve that "unity of consciousness" which is the necessary factor of human existence.

One final point on this subject remains for consideration. Is this consciousness, of which we have been speaking, limited? and, if so, to what extent? Are we, as a matter of fact, in that state conscious of anything going on outside its realm? Is there, for instance, any communion with those who are still dwelling on earth? What is the answer which Revelation enables us to give to questions like these? Now, already we have shown that under certain circumstances some such connection between earth and Paradise is permitted: it was so

* It must always be remembered that the probability of the soul in Paradise interceding for us below, affords no argument for our asking them to do so. See Bishop Harold Browne, art. xxii. "Purgatory," p. 512.

in the cases of Moses and Samuel, and of the spirits of the departed on the day of Christ's Resurrection ; but then only for a special purpose.

Again, there is a passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews* which, if even of doubtful import, cannot be omitted from consideration, where we read of a "cloud of witnesses,"† congregated as it were in a vast amphitheatre, and beholding, in the arena below the great struggle which is continually going on between the followers of Christ, the heroes of the Christian age, and the heathen in the world ; and in order to incite the Christians to do their bravest in the battle, the Apostle calls attention to this throng of spectators who are looking on and who are interested in the conflict. The whole picture may be only "a figure of speech," borrowed from the scene of the Roman games, although one very able biblical commentator‡ considers that it is to be interpreted literally of the spirits of the departed, looking down upon the scene of this life of Christian conflict, and taking account of the tremendous issues of the battle. Similar doubtfulness of interpretation surrounds our Lord's statement, that "Abraham rejoiced to see His day"§ words which are sometimes quoted in support of the same idea, although it is difficult to show that there is in them any reference whatever to the Intermediate State.

Thus, so far as Revelation is concerned with the question as to whether the departed souls hold anything like constant communion with us on earth, we must leave the answer in some uncertainty. The idea is, perhaps, as is sometimes said, more than a pious opinion, but even then it requires to be held with very careful reservation and caution. For we can readily see how great an interference it might be with the happiness of the departed, if

* Heb. xii. 1.

† The evidence of *μάρτυς* ever being used as a mere spectator does not exist. See Professor Westcott, *i.l.*, who adds, "These champions of old time occupy the place of spectators, . . . but they are spectators who interpret to us the meaning of our struggle, and who bear testimony to the certainty of our success if we strive lawfully."

‡ Dean Alford. § S. John viii. 56.

they were made *fully conscious of all* that goes on in the world which they have quitted. Moreover, the idea of any such constant intercommunion between earth and Paradise might easily be made a rival to the ministry of angels on our behalf, and be construed into a second distinct ministry of the souls of the departed, to be exercised for the benefit and consolation of those who remain on earth: and so we might be led to a revival of that doctrine of the Invocation of Saints, which has been condemned by the Church (Art. xxii.)

But in thus showing the improbability that the departed become conscious of the entire earthly scene, we do not wish to impugn the faith in the Communion of Saints. Indeed, to do so would be to undermine the fundamental conclusion of our argument concerning prayers on their behalf. The reciprocal relation between the living and the dead, which we assert in this doctrine, is as certain as it is precious. This, however, is communion of spirit, as opposed to visible communion. It is the mystical union which exists betwixt Christ and His Church. It is the communion which we have with one another in the Body of Christ. It is the communion which we specially realise round the Christian altar: that union between the saints on earth and the saints in Paradise to which our ancient Liturgies abundantly testify.

It is of such communion that the Bible speaks when we read that we are come "to the spirits of just men made perfect;"* not, as we shall presently see, perfect in the final and fullest sense, but perfect so far as the trials and sufferings of this world could make them. Then we shall have entered upon a state where a further work of perfection remains to be accomplished. So, again, when we are taught to think and believe that the souls of the departed live in Christ just as we live in Him, and we therefore say of them, with S. Paul,† that "they sleep in Jesus," *i.e.*, go to rest through Jesus, or, in other words, "that Jesus prepares for them a place, and afterwards conducts them

* *Τεταλωμένων*. Heb. xii. 23. † 1 Thess. iv. 14.

to it upon death"; or when we say of them that they "die in the Lord,"* death not separating them from union with Christ; or that they "depart to be with Christ,"† to be, together, and in the same place with Him; or, once more, when we say that they are "present with the Lord"‡ as our Lord Himself pointed out to the penitent thief would be the case, when He said to him, "To-day shalt thou be *with* Me in Paradise;" when we say all this, we declare that there is this bond of union betwixt Christ, ourselves, and the departed; and, in making this declaration, we add our last link to the chain of testimony in support of a conscious life in the Intermediate State. Such communion without consciousness would assuredly be unmeaning.

Hence, to conclude all these considerations, we assert, that the truths and statements of revelation, as well as human reason itself, are in favour of the state of the departed being one of conscious life, and that the only thing which remains against the idea is, that which has been called "the sensitiveness of imagination." For, as has been truly said, "great and embarrassing as may be the difficulties in any conception we may attempt to form of the conscious life of the soul after the collapse of the bodily life, the difficulties of its denial seem to be so much greater, that nothing could force its repudiation on a religious mind but a demonstration of its impossibility, which never has, and, in the nature of things, never can be given."

On this premise and supposition that there is a conscious life in the Intermediate State, we proceed, in our third consideration to show that *progress and development under due limitation may possibly and reasonably be conceived with regard to it.*

Now, perhaps, there is no part of the subject which, in spite of its difficulties, is more in agreement with modern religious thought than this will be. The idea of development of life is one which finds a ready acceptance everywhere. It agrees

* Rev. xiv. 13. † Phil. i. 23. ‡ 2 Cor. v. 8.

with those theories of evolution* which are rapidly being linked with all our preconceived notions of life, whether of its origin, or of its subsequent history: whether supported by revelation, or attested by scientific research. "Evolution," it has been pointedly said, "is in the air. It is the category of the age; a *partus temporis*; a necessary consequence of our wider field of comparison." † Evolution and Christianity have at last become partners, and although there is still some insecurity in this new alliance, yet every day, almost, seems to give to it a character and likelihood of greater permanence. Therefore it is only in agreement with this new method in the conception of things, and more especially of the essence of things, viz., life, that we pursue our inquiry about the Intermediate State in the direction of such development. For, apart from other considerations, if there be such a law of growth belonging to all life as we know it now, there is some antecedent probability in the hypothesis, that it may be the law which governs the life in other stages than those which we know at present.

But whilst assuming this probability of development, it is important to notice that no such governing law of evolution gives countenance to the idea of repetition, since all the movement we contend for is progressive, and not retrogressive.‡ We do not attempt to follow its operation in the direction of its correlative of deterioration. The theory of the "survival of the fittest," which seems to be the outcome of scientific evolution, is the only ex-

* "Evolution," the late Canon Aubrey Moore, one of its ablest and safest exponents amongst theologians, says, "means unfolding, and the simplest illustration of what is meant by evolution is *growth*. . . . Like the word 'growth,' it is applied to things which do not grow, and at last it has come to be a sort of grand word for progress" ("Oxford House Papers" xxi.)

† Illingworth, Essay in Lux Mundi on the "Incarnation in relation to Development," p. 181.

‡ It is important to remember that evolution, or the history of change, in the natural world (or even in the moral world*) does not always show itself as *progression*, but often as *degeneration*; a good instance of which, among mammals, is seen in the case of the whale.

* See Henry Drummond, "Natural Law," &c., "Degeneration."

planation which the thorough evolutionist advances for the present aspect of the natural world. However, by the limitations of our Essay we are precluded from the necessity of following this part of the subject, and have only to consider the onward and upward movement of the law in the further stages of life within the unseen veil.

Now, we have noticed above, that in any theory of the operation of the law of progress in the Intermediate State, we must strenuously repudiate the notion of a second chance, or repeated opportunity of advancement being allowed to those who have neglected to use such spiritual opportunities as have been afforded them in the present time.

The very alteration in the condition of life hereafter, would forbid the idea. Take a single instance by way of illustration. In this life we have, as the encasement of our being, a body of flesh. This mortal body (*i.e.*, "the body of this flesh") is not to be regarded "as a burden by which the soul is temporarily bound down": though since the Fall its tendency lies in this direction, but, as "an essential condition of our" (present) "personality" to be worn and disciplined: a necessity of existence during our earthly career that may serve as a test of our capacity for future government. Thus, its strong lusts and appetites, which are ever struggling for the mastery (Gal. v. 17), and which it is our duty to "bring into subjection" (1 Cor. ix. 27), become a special sphere of our earthly probation, which can never again, so far as we know, be allowed us.

From the moment of first consciousness, an inveterate conflict commences between flesh and spirit, upon which a mighty issue in the future depends—a conflict, moreover, anxiously watched by the unseen hosts of heaven and hell. For if the flesh triumphs, if lust and appetite prevail, and are not subjected in accordance with Christian obligation: if, in fact, we become our body's slave, then it would appear that the test of capacity to govern hereafter falls to the ground, without possibility, at least in this particular, of

future recovery. In such an instance the prospect of future ruling goes by default. We may urge our claim like the rich man in the parable when he asked for the service of Lazarus :* but it will be refused.

That there is this prospect before us of government in the next world seems certain. Take, for instance, Christ's promise to His disciples, forfeited in the case of Judas for this very reason of proved incapacity. "Ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." † We are told that one of the results of the mediatorial work of Jesus Christ is to make us "kings unto God." ‡ So also in the matter of future judgment; the saints are said to "judge the world," § and again, to have the exalted distinction of judging angels, || and, in the Epistle to the Church of Thyatira, the promise is held out by the Son of God, that "he that overcometh and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give the power over the nations." ¶ These are some of the passages of Holy Scripture which seem to foreshadow a future reign for men: and for this reign we contend that our present life in "the body of this flesh" may possibly be intended to fit us. If, therefore, we prove ourselves incapable of such royal distinction through failure in this lesser government of the body on earth, we can only conclude that such honour may be forfeited for ever.**

Or regard the same illustration from another point of view: not only do we think that our capacity to govern is being tested by our life in the flesh, but also our readiness to be governed. In other words, we are placed on earth to learn the lessons of *subjection* and *subordination* of human will. In this lower life we hear constantly a voice within clamorous for its own wishes and gratification, a voice requiring perpetually

* S. Luke xvi. 24, "Send Lazarus."

† S. Matt. xix. 28; S. Luke xxii. 28-30. ‡ Rev. i. 6; v. 10.

§ 1 Cor. vi. 2. || 1 Cor. vi. 3. ¶ Rev. ii. 26.

** Cf. the whole teaching of the Parable of the Unjust Steward, esp. S. Luke xvi. 10-12.

to be silenced by the "touch not, taste not, handle not," of a Divine will, thwarting its movements, refusing its behests, and removing out of the way its treasured ambitions. Frequently the active human frame is forced to lie still in order to be made conscious of its own weakness and impotence. The quick-beating pulses of energy and enthusiasm are checked, the hands are tied and bound by a chain of forbidding circumstances, galling beyond measure to the impulsive spirit that longs for liberty of action. The eyes, straining to discern the future and to scrutinise the unseen, are repulsed by the barriers of sense and time. All such restraint, we maintain, is to be regarded in the light of an education, necessary to the spirit of the future perfected man who will be admitted to walk in the perfect all-satisfying light of the Presence of God. Again and again, in the midst of the checks and repulses of the human will, the prayer of the Psalmist involuntarily escapes from the lips, "Teach me to do Thy will, for Thou art my God,"* and the petition of the Lord's Prayer meets with its corresponding echo, as it strikes against the barrier mountain of human circumstances in the words "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." So the needful training for the future is secured. Heaven must never witness a recurrence of Satan's unseemly warfare:† and therefore, all who shall enter this privileged state need to qualify themselves by thus successfully meeting the test of obedience and subjection presented by the thwartings of human will in present time. All stirrings of rebellion in the spirit of man may in this way be crushed out, and, so far as can be, a necessary fitness for the future inheritance established.

Thus, our illustration shows a way in which a distinct training for the future can be carried on in present life, a training, moreover, which it is inconceivable, with our present knowledge, to imagine possible for the Intermediate State; for then the mortal body which had been given for this purpose is withdrawn, and no other means that we know,

* Ps. cxliii. 10.

† Rev. xii. 7. Comp. 1 Tim. iii. 6.

or can conjecture, is forthcoming to accomplish the same end.

We conclude, therefore, that it must be a delusive hope, and if entertained one sad and terrible to contemplate, for a man to imagine that he may live now as he pleases, and still not affect his future position ; in other words, that in the Intermediate State he can recover all his lost spiritual ground. This will never be. Here we are in agreement with those who declare the unalterableness of the present. Wasted spiritual opportunities, wasted periods of education, the trauancies of present time inflict an irremediable loss which no length of sojourn, and no possibility of discipline beyond the grave can, we maintain, recover or amend. It is equally idle to build future hope upon such misleading and false foundation, as it is to pass a sentence of comfort and final satisfaction when beholding the placid cast of countenance and repose of feature which the dead face may wear, at a time when it is no longer affected by the anguish of that last and fruitless effort to retain the soul within the body. In both cases the comfort is as untrue as it is illogical.

But, whilst careful to ward off such error from the threshold of this part of our treatise, we must be equally cautious that we do not ruthlessly shatter such hopes as may have been rightly conceived of the Intermediate State. Thus, the prevalent, and, I maintain, correct notion about "the souls of the faithful after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh," is "that they are in joy and felicity," a belief therefore which should not be roughly handled nor quickly discredited ; it is an anchor of inexpressible comfort to thousands of devout souls, and, if removed or disturbed, might cast them adrift from any joyous contemplation of their blessed dead, or even of their own death to come. It is not an uncommon experience to find persons made exceedingly miserable by words thus incautiously spoken, and by expressions thus inconsiderately used. We might quote, for instance, the despair which is easily generated by the unauthorised statement that hereafter we

shall see this life of ours in its true colours, stript of all present disguise, and that then we shall be compelled to pass judgment upon it in agreement with this revelation. We may be right in the expectation about this vision of previous life, but surely it is neither true nor reasonable to say that there will be this *post facto* judgment. All action must abide in the sphere of its circumstances at the time, and can never be taken out of that sphere for the purpose of future judgment. Assuredly it would be unfair to judge the sins of childhood by the better-instructed conscience and greater experience of a more advanced age. And, by the same reasoning, if, when our knowledge and vision of God hereafter become enlarged, so that we understand better the sinfulness of sin, it is equally wrong to aggravate the spectacle, already sad enough for reflection, by letting a light of condemnation fall upon it which the justice of its circumstances would disallow. The remorse of the future will be the genuine sorrow that, in spite of the knowledge of right, and the sensitive working of our conscience at the time, we yet fell into sin. We cannot properly think of any further retribution in this sense.

Again, much of the purely speculative teaching on the subject of contrition in the Intermediate State has the same disheartening effect. It may be a true conjecture that sorrow for past sin will be an absorbing element in the life-condition experienced between the grave and the resurrection,*

* We cannot altogether dissociate the thought of suffering from true contrition, whether now or hereafter. With regard to the latter it is wisely summed up in these words : "As a class we could not affirm that those, who bring forth no worthy fruits of repentance, with whom, after a long period of deadly sin, repentance has been but a superficial work, may not after death be in a state of privation of the sight of God (the '*pœna damni*'), not being admitted at once to the sight of Him, Whom on earth they little cared to think of or speak to, and Whom they served with a cold and grudging service. And the absence of the sight of God, Whom the soul in grace knows to be its only good, would, when the distractions of this world no longer dazzled it, be an intense suffering, above all the sufferings of this life, while the *knowledge* that it was saved and that it belonged to Jesus, and that it would, in all eternity, behold God, and be the object of His Infinite Love, would be "joy and felicity" above all the spiritual joys in this life, even apart from all those consolations which God might bestow on the soul when He had made it His Own for ever" (Pusey, "*Eirenicon*," I., p. 193).

though we would remark that there is no Scriptural ground for this assertion, nor is there the slightest hint given on the subject in the Book of Revelation. On the supposition, however, that the spirits of the just in Paradise are nearer to Jesus than they are now, and, if nearer to Him, that then the deeper must be the contrition of the soul for past sin, we may reasonably conclude that a prominent place is assigned to this passion of heart-sorrow in the future resting home. But it must never be forgotten that contrition is joyous rather than grievous, it is (to use a paradox) the joy of sin beheld in the light of divine forgiveness, it is the mingling of Christ's atoning Blood with the tears of human sorrow. True contrition wells up from a heart filled with the sense of pardon, and overcome with intense gratitude to Jesus who has won this reconciliation with God by His Death. The contrite soul is a happy soul, aye, consciously happy, even when weighed down with the conscious burden of its own sin. The contrite soul is "sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." Hence, contrition in the Intermediate State, when explained, need not interfere with the felicity of souls therein. It is no dreary contemplation of an evil past, no irremediable sorrow at the recollection of sin, but rather the joyous return of the spirit into the arms of Jesus, in overwhelming gratitude for His love and salvation, accompanied with a generous penitence for those sufferings of His which were caused by our sins.

The same objection may be raised against many expressions (which, even if true, are specially liable to misconception) sometimes employed to describe the soul's condition and experience in this stage of future life: such, for instance, as "the awfulness of Paradise," "the penance of Paradise," &c. It is conceivable, and perhaps likely, as we have said already, that the true vision of self may be revealed in that day, and that, in consequence of such vivid realisation, there will be added a distinguishing seriousness and solemnity to this epoch of life; but we can only think, in this case, of a transitory,

rather than an abiding emotion meeting with its counterpart of consolation in the expanding vision of God, and in the display of His unspeakable and unchanging love. So, again, it is quite probable that life in the Intermediate State may have something of a penitential character—especially if we are right in accepting the assumption that, except for the Fall, there would have been no necessity at all for this interval of human life between heaven and earth—and, in consequence, we may rightly think that the departed will long for their release* in the same way as we may now wish to depart from this life to be with Christ. But here, too, we must never regard Paradise as a place of unwilling detention, even though our sojourn there be reckoned as a part of the remedial discipline necessary to our spiritual declension in present time, since, after all, it is the abiding in a home where the Presence of Christ is a much more sensible experience than any we can enjoy here, and where the foretaste of heaven's joy is sufficient to pacify and soothe all spiritual discontent and restlessness.

Hence, it is more in agreement with the name of Paradise, to allow the idea of felicity to stand out in bold relief, and to discountenance all gloomy forebodings of the scene. It should be spread before the eyes of men as one of God's bright spots in the future, a treasure to be desired, a goal to be striven after. Moreover, we should unceasingly contemplate, in their blissful joy, the souls of the righteous seated in the unfading sunshine of a land of light, the light of the Father's love, the light of the Saviour's presence, the light of the Spirit's illumination.

Keeping before us these necessary reservations of subject and intention, we now proceed to examine the question of life in the Intermediate State *in relation to its possibilities of spiritual advancement and restoration.*

There are two weighty considerations which lie in the direction of some such probability: the normal unspiritual

* Comp. Rev. vi. 10.

condition of the baptised when they leave this world,* and the case of the heathen who would seem to be utterly unprepared when they die to enter upon the blissful contemplation of God. For they have never had the opportunity of knowing Him except through the workings of an instinct falsely directed, manifesting itself in the imagination that "the Godhead is like unto gold or silver or stone graven by art and man's device" (Acts xvii. 29). They have received no offer of salvation, and cannot therefore, on any principles of Divine justice, be condemned for a rejection of Christ. The Divine government of the world has never been revealed to them, so that they could not shape their lives in any obedience to its laws and obligations.

Hence, if we are to accept in any way the salvability of the heathen, as assuredly we must do, the perplexing question is at once raised: where is their salvation then to be sealed, and how are they to attain unto any correspondence with God's eternal kingdom, unless an opportunity to this end be granted in the State intermediate between death and resurrection?†

Now, on the assurance that the Church of Christ, Militant

* We do not, by this statement, twice made in the Essay, seek to "limit the omnipotence of God"—He can "in a short time fulfil a long time" (Wisdom iv. 13). So in a moment He could fit a soul for the vision of Himself. All we desire to note is the fact of the necessity for such a fitness existing at the moment of death in the case of numerous souls, a necessity which in some way demands to be met, unless we are to believe in a wholesale perdition which is inconceivable, and abhorrent to the religious mind. (See Pusey's "Eirenicon," I., pp. 192, 193.)

† See a very useful chapter on the Salvation of the Heathen, in Dean Plumptre's "Spirits in Prison." The two following passages from "The System of Christian Doctrine," vol. iv., by Dörner, and "The Doctrine of Sin," by Dr. Julius Müller, two eminent German theologians of our day, are also instructive on the same subject. "The absoluteness of Christianity demands that no one be judged before Christianity has been made accessible and brought home to him."—Dörner. And Dr. Julius Müller, who states of the heathen that they will indisputably hereafter, when beyond the limits of this earthly life, be placed in a condition to enter upon the way of a return to God if they choose. Canon Luckock, again, who quotes both these passages in a paper read at the Manchester Congress, 1888, gives it as his opinion that the offer of salvation in and through the Name of Jesus will be made to the heathen in the Intermediate State. The axiom of the Early Church, "Extra ecclesiam nulla salus," so frequently pressed by S. Augustine, in all the rigour of its limitation, does not seem to have ever been applied to the case of the heathen.

here on earth, continues her existence beyond the realm of present life, still pursuing her history within the veil as the Church Expectant, until the day when she issues forth as the prepared Bride of Christ (Rev. xix. 7), to meet the Bridegroom, and with Him enters heaven as the Church Triumphant—on this assurance, we rest a belief in the continuance and perpetuation of Church work and Church life beyond the present world. To some, no doubt, such an idea may be strange and startling, and yet it is scarcely unreasonable. "Can we conceive of a Church," it has been asked, "without organisation?" Can we, let us further add, rightly assume that the Church of Christ, possessing an inherent and indestructible vitality through the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, will so violate her Divine constitution and break up the tradition of her Divine life as to remain idle and inactive in any portion of her corporate existence? Surely, this would seem impossible, and therefore we conclude that in Paradise the Church must, in some way, continue her life and her ministry; we conceive it likely that she will still preserve her worship, though not her Sacraments; that the stream of her countless intercessions will continue to flow; in a word, that she will pursue her common corporate life.

And, if this be the case, may not the ministry of the Divine Word find an enlarged scope for its exercise in the case of the heathen who never previously heard the name of Christ? Is it impossible or unreasonable to imagine that a similar privilege of listening to the Gospel will be allowed to them as to the antediluvian souls, and, that in some way, we know not how, an admission into the Church of Christ will be effected on their behalf?

Of course we can have no right to conjecture, that either in this life or in that of the Intermediate State, God has other conditions of salvation than those which He has revealed. Thus, it is said by Christ, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned."*

* S. Mark xvi. 16.

Again, S. Peter declares, without hesitation, there is no salvation in any other than in Jesus Christ, "for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." * Once more, Christ teaches His disciples, "No man cometh to the Father but by Me." † And yet, in the face of these clear passages of Holy Scripture, we find also a hope for the heathen's future foreshadowed: as, for instance, when we read that "God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that worketh righteousness is accepted by Him:" ‡ and, again, where S. Paul at Athens speaks of God as overlooking the "times of ignorance." § But, then, here arises the difficulty ; for if God accepts the heathen, and yet if there be no acceptance apart from Christ, where is this knowledge of Christ to be gained ? It *can* only be, we think, in the Intermediate State. And perhaps, if we were less prejudiced, and more open to conviction, we might be willing to accept, even on such testimony, the idea that faith and repentance will after death find some place in this special case of the heathen. God might, it is true, have settled the matter beyond all doubt by a more direct revelation. This, however, we can see, would scarcely have been in agreement with Divine wisdom. A certainty here might have been most prejudicial to missionary work. || Again, not only the heathen, but also others who had not the same title might easily have rested on the prospect of this possible consideration hereafter, and thus, a more explicit revelation might have become an inducement for carelessness of life, and have led men to take refuge in the fool's maxim—"Let

* Acts iv. 12.

† S. John xiv. 6. It is true that Christ does not here say that every man (*e.g.*, the heathen) must be conscious *now* that this is the means of approach to God. We can conceive that such an one might in the future find the approach opened to him, and that the means by which it has been opened, viz., the redeeming love of Christ, will *then* be first manifested.

‡ Acts x. 34, 35. § Acts xvii. 30.

|| Bear in mind that no such future possibility for the heathen can release the Church from the Divine obligation of her commission to "preach the Gospel to every creature" (S. Mark xvi. 15). The blessing attached to the fulfilment of this command may not thus be forfeited (Is. xxxii. 20 ; cf. Is. lii. 7).

us eat, and drink, and be merry while on earth,"* in the hope of securing this further offer and extension of Divine mercy, whilst, on the other hand, without such future hope we might have been led to much misunderstanding, and to many thoughts of Divine injustice. Thus it is that the imperfect revelation vouchsafed best serves the Divine purpose, and the glimpses of future light thrown on the dark pages of heathen history furnish us with confidence in the love of God and provide for all the circumstances of doubt and difficulty, which the case of the heathen in the future world, would suggest.

But this leads to a further consideration. For, if we may forecast and allow this prospect of the spiritual restoration of the heathen hereafter, do we not open the door to other possibilities? Thus, there is the case of the Christian who is reared amid godless surroundings, and who scarcely hears or sees anything to remind him of any baptismal obligations. How many such there are in our crowded cities, and in our distant emigrant stations! Are these, we ask, when they die, to find no *locus penitentie*, no opportunity of recovering the conscience which has been deadened by every felt influence since the day when they left the Font of their Baptism? No doubt this is a serious inquiry, and yet who will accept the awful consequence of refusing it a hearing? We, at least, dare not do so. And, as the vision of future hope for the human race thus expands, is it any surprise that it should be found at length touching the outskirts of the life of those, who, though they have always believed in Christ and made efforts to serve Him, yet have not made, for various reasons which will be sifted and weighed in the Divine scales of judgment, all the use of their spiritual opportunities, and who, certainly, are not, when they die, in a fit state to enter upon the beatific vision? Yea, and beyond even these, may there not, we further ask, be granted to others "a time of maturing the fruit of grace,"†—those in whom God has already "begun"

* Eccles. ii. 24; Is. xxii. 13, lvi. 12; S. Luke xii. 19; Cor. xv. 32.

† See Newman's "Parochial Sermons," vol. iii., p. 377.

on earth a distinctly good work—until it reach the “perfection” of holiness, and they are capable of receiving the highest rewards which are held out for all such in the future?

We are not prepared, perhaps, to go so far as the Eastern Church in allowing that it is even possible for souls in the Intermediate State to “pass over from the fearful anticipation to a joyful one”;* but we can agree with Bishop Bull, who sketches the prospect we have in view, when he says:—“it is the Divine ordinance and dispensation, that those who are saved should proceed by degrees† to their perfect beatitude.”

We thus see that we advance no mere unauthorised speculation in this matter.

The early Fathers of the Church, it is true, give a most divided opinion on the subject. Thus we have some, as S. Clement of Rome,‡ Ignatius,§ and, much later, S. Cyprian,|| who deny that there is any such change after death. Justin Martyr ignores the subject altogether, or at least leaves it most doubtful.¶ Irenæus, again, is equally uncertain.** Tertullian, the earliest known Patristic authority for prayers for the dead, favours the idea of change under certain limitations.†† Origen,‡‡ who may be said to have started the idea of a purgatory in hell, advances in support of such change, a step beyond Tertullian. S. Ambrose,§§ and his disciple,||| S. Augustine, though with less clearness, both agree to certain change. Finally, S. Chrysostom¶¶ speaks of ways by which some refreshment may be ensured to the souls of the departed.

Hence it is seen that the Patristic evidence is scarcely so

* For quotation and reference see art. “Future Retribution,” *Church Quarterly*, vol. xxvi., No. 52.

† “*Per gradus proficere*,” an expression seemingly borrowed from S. Irenæus, lib. v., 36, *q. v.*

‡ Ep. ii. ad Corinth., sec. viii.

§ Ep. ad Magnes, sec. v. “ἕκαστος τῶν εἰρημίνων εἰς τὸν τόπον τοῦ αἰρεθίντος μέλλει χωρεῖν.” (See Bishop Lightfoot, *i. l.*, “Apostolic Fathers,” part ii., vol. iii., p. 168.)

|| Ad Demetrian Opera, vol. i., p. 196.

¶ Dial. cum Tryph., c. 5. ** Adv. Hæc. v. 31. Comp. passage above.

†† Kaye’s Tertullian, p. 328. ‡‡ In Jerem. Hom. xvi., vol. i., p. 155.

§§ Enarr. in Ps. i. ||| Serm. cxlii., sec. ii. ¶¶ Hom. in I Cor. xv. 46.

decided, or so sufficiently consistent as to allow us to rest much on the testimony of its authority.

But there is a far more important field for examination than that which the writings of the Fathers afford. What does Holy Scripture say in favour of any such idea of progress and change in the Intermediate State? Let us carefully consider the testimony of S. Paul on the subject. We notice, first, the important contrast between "*now*" and "*then*"* when he is speaking of the increase in our powers of perception and knowledge to which we shall attain in another state. "*Now* we see through a glass darkly,† but *then* face to face; *now* I know in part, but *then* shall I know even as also I am known."‡ In present time, the Apostle would teach, the mirror on which the things of God are reflected is an imperfect speculum: the great truths of Divine counsel are only revealed in dark enigma, and the features of self-knowledge are blurred and obscure. Hereafter this will not be the case; realities will then be made apparent, and we shall possess the same knowledge of ourselves as that which God has of us now. The passage is, of course, open to the objection, that the possibilities spoken of refer to the future life *after* the Resurrection rather than to that between death and resurrection; but, if we allow that the thought of the Apostle extends in any degree beyond this life, it is scarcely reasonable to impose this limitation, since the distinction he makes, is between present and future, visible and invisible: and, as S. Paul knew what the future was, we cannot legitimately refer his statement to one part of the life in Heaven, and not to the other part in Paradise. Therefore, if this be the true explanation, we have in this passage the Apostle, in a spirit of prophecy, declaring his conviction that a great change will take place hereafter, and that a new progression will be made both in sight and knowledge.§

* 1 Cor. xiii. 12; See Bishop Wordsworth, *i. l.*

† "Per speculum, et per ænigmata," Iren. iv. 9. cf. Numb. xii. 8.

‡ R.V., "as I have been known."

§ See a note on this passage in the "Speaker's Commentary."

Again, in the same Epistle * S. Paul speaks of "waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."† This striking expression, "the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" is the day of His visible appearance ("Παρουσία"), the day of the Second Advent, when "every eye shall see Him,"‡ and the close shall be put to the present dispensation of sense and time; so that once more we have the great Apostle, looking down that unknown period of centuries which includes the whole vista of the Intermediate State, and speaking of a work which shall continue along its whole course, a work steadfast and continuous, reaching its completion when the souls of men are found in that day "unreprovable" (R.V.), and "safe from all impeachment."

There are those who oppose such an interpretation of these passages, by the very doubtful argument, that, since the Second Advent was always regarded as an imminent event in apostolic time, S. Paul never contemplated the prospect of an Intermediate State for those to whom he wrote. It is hardly necessary to point out that the testimony which the Apostle elsewhere gives § to this expectation of Christ's coming is by no means sufficient to outweigh other contemporary evidence which points to a contrary expectation.|| It was natural that in his day there should be some immediate anticipation of Christ's return; just as, after so many hundred years since His Ascension, it is only natural to think that He

* 1 Cor. i. 7, 8.

† All such expressions as the day of Christ, and the day of God (2 S. Pet. iii. 12) point to the day on which Christ and God will be supreme—the great day in the future, when God will be all in all. (See Canon Liddon's "Advent Sermons," vol. ii., ser. xxxiv.)

‡ Rev. i. 7.

§ Especially mark the contrast of thought on this expectation which is found in the two epistles to the Thessalonians. See Davidson, *Introd.* vol. ii., p. 448, and Bishop Ellicot, *i.l.*; *cf.* 1 Thess. iv. 15, 16, v. 2, 3, and 2 Thess. ii. 2, 3.

|| See a useful note on this subject in "Speaker's Commentary," *i.l.*, 2 Thess. ii. 2.

will never return in our time. And yet, day by day, even whilst the Apostle was writing his epistles, men were passing out of life, of whom he could hardly think otherwise than that they had entered the Intermediate State.

The same reasoning applies to a third statement of the Apostle, made with regard to the Philippian Church :—"confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:"* where he encourages his converts, with the firm belief of his heart, that the good work begun in their souls could not end in failure or imperfection, but rather would go on to its completion until the day when Christ should return ; in other words, that their spiritual progress would continue through the period of the Intermediate State, until Christ's Second Advent.

If, then, this idea of spiritual progress beyond death be a true and Scriptural one, we need be at no loss to see how and by what process it can be effected. We must, of course, never think of any work being done in the souls of men separate from Him who is the Agent of all sanctification—God the Holy Ghost. He will remain the Author and Giver of life in Paradise as well as on earth. He alone can operate, both now and hereafter, in the work of spiritual development. What, however, we have previously said about the probable continuance of the Church's spiritual mission within the veil enables us to form an intelligent conception as to the way in which He will accomplish this work, though all that we can advance in support of this conception must of necessity, without express revelation, be simple hypothesis.

We can imagine, for instance, the Church in the Intermediate State, continuing a course of ministry similar to that by which the sanctification of souls is carried on in present time. The Divine Word may be proclaimed by a company of preachers unembarrassed by the difficulties which now hinder its free course and acceptance. A ministry

* Philip. i. 6.

of intercession may be employed, which by its faith and intense reality may lead to miracles of grace quite impossible to the Church in her militant state. There be may even some further operation of the Holy Ghost, by which, without the aid of visible means, the blessings of incorporation into Christ's Church and of the soul's feeding upon His Body and Blood may be vouchsafed.

And although all this is confessedly pure conjecture, still it is reasonable, and scarcely an improbable supposition, when taken in connection with the assurance that the Church will continue her life and existence in the Intermediate State.

We will now consider the same subject in its relation to that disciplinary treatment of the soul which, according to the opinion of many, will take place within the veil. And here we require to examine the special passage of Holy Scripture which is always quoted in support of such spiritual purification hereafter. It occurs in S. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians (iii. 13), where the Apostle speaks of a man's doctrine being tested hereafter by fire, to prove what sort it is. He introduces the subject by stating that there is only one foundation which can be laid as the basis of Christian teaching, viz., Jesus Christ, and that this foundation is to be tested by some discriminating fire.* The work is to be *tested*, in order that God may discern and prove whether it is genuine: or whether, the basis of teaching being unstable, inaccurate, misleading, and unorthodox, the fabric of life and character raised upon it will prove correspondingly transitory and unsubstantial.† Moreover, this fire is not only to test the fundamental doctrine of the spiritual building, but also the character of him who lays the foundation,‡ so that if the founder stand the test under which his work fails, "he is

* Fire is frequently referred to in the Bible as a symbol of purification (Malachi iii. 2; S. Matt. iii. 11; 1 S. Peter i. 7), and, occasionally, also as a symbol of punishment (S. Matt. xxv. 41; S. Mark ix. 44, 49).

† Comp. S. Matt. vii. 24, 29.

‡ The foundation is not so much any particular doctrine of Jesus Christ, as Jesus Christ Himself (Alford, *i. l.*).

saved," but if the work stands the test under which the founder fails, then "he shall suffer loss." * Such seems to be the Apostolic statement and argument about a fire of purification hereafter, and the only question of doubt is whether this fiery scrutiny is *something momentary, and in the future*, taking place at Christ's second return to judge the quick and the dead, or *something progressive*, lasting until this day of final consummation, and, in consequence, throughout the epoch of the Intermediate State. The former view, indeed, might seem to be more probable,† but there are many who think otherwise and believe that the reference of the passage is to a work of purification by fire commencing immediately upon entering within the veil.‡

Other passages of Holy Scripture, perhaps of even more doubtful interpretation, are sometimes quoted in support of this idea of purgatorial discipline taking place in the Intermediate State. For instance, we read of those who hereafter will be beaten with few stripes or with many; § and, again: of there being a more "tolerable" judgment || for some than

* The loss being that of the special reward which God has in store for the sound teacher.

† See Dean Alford, Bishop Wordsworth, and Canon Evans, in the Speaker's Commentary. Origen held a theory that at the day of judgment all men must pass through this fire, even the saints and prophets (Hom. iii. on Psalm xxxvi., No. 1): and many others followed his leading. For example, Lactantius says (vii. 21): "eternal fire shall try even the just." Gregory Nazianzen (Orat. xxxix.): "in the next world, perhaps, all men will be baptised with fire," which he calls the penitents' baptism. Bishop Ambrose, again (Serm. xx. in Ps. cxviii.): "all must pass through the flames, even S. John and S. Peter." Hilary adds his belief (in Ps. cxviii., Gmel.) that "even the Virgin Mary" will undergo this trial of fire. Lastly, Gregory Nyssen (Orat. de mortuis, tom. iii.) speaks of "the purging fire which takes away the filth commingling with the soul." Other authorities will be found quoted in Dean Plumptre's "Spirits in Prison," chap. x. Also see Dr. Pusey, "What is of Faith," 1881, pp. 108, 109, and for other references, pp. 112-115.

‡ As Bishop Harold Browne remarks in his "Exposition of the Articles" (art. xxii.), "even the Fathers did not uniformly interpret this passage of a purgatorial fire either before or at the final judgment, since S. Chrysostom (Hom. ix. on 1 Cor. iii. 13) explains it of a probatory issue ending in rescue from annihilation, and not pointing to any suffering by fire at all."

§ S. Luke xii. 48.

|| S. Matt. xi. 22, 24. S. Luke x. 14. S. Mark vi. 11.

for others: and, once more, we read of the payment of debt being demanded to the very last farthing.* These are passages which to some minds seem to prove that there is an underlying thought in the revelation of God on the subject of a disciplinary purification hereafter, which will take place previous to the final judgment, when a test will be applied to some souls certainly, upon which their eternal future will be made to depend.†

If, however, any such idea of spiritual progress by means of purification in the Intermediate State be allowable, care must be taken to avoid the error and confusion of thought which still widely prevail on the subject. Thus, in the first place, a very clear distinction has to be made between this and any such notion of purgatory as is popularly held in the Roman Communion, and which is condemned in our 22nd Article of Religion as being "a fond thing vainly invented and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God."‡

* S. Matt. v. 26. Comp. xviii. 34.

† It is hardly allowable directly to press such an application of any of these passages, in the face of the great doubtfulness which exists about their interpretation, and certainly they can only form a most hypothetical basis for any doctrine, however safely guarded, of future purgatory. S. Augustine relied on S. Matt. xii. 32 for the doctrine of a purgatorial fire to cleanse away the remainder of sin (Herzog. Encycl., art. "Purgatory"), and confessed the great difficulty of the passage in S. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians. S. Augustine's testimony on the subject is negative rather than positive. He thought such an idea of purgatory was to be received as neither incredible nor improbable, but not necessarily as an article of the creed. (See Bishop Harold Browne, art. xxii.)

‡ The doctrine referred to would seem to have originated from the idea, that because the merits of Christ are infinite, therefore no single finite creature can exhaust them: and that there must, in consequence, remain a surplus of His merit beyond what is made effectual and requisite for the individual soul, for which there is a use and necessity to be found. This unwarranted assertion is followed by another, equally erroneous and startling, viz., that over and above the good works of men which are necessary for the soul's salvation, there is a further measure of works which are called "works of supererogation," to be applied for the benefit of other souls who need them. Therefore this surplus of Christ's infinite merits, and this superfluity of human works, together, form a fund or "treasury of merit" (as it is called) which is at the disposal of the Pope, or Bishop of Rome to use as he sees desirable in the way of indulgences—indulgences to remit penance, whether of temporal punishment or of

This, at least, is not what we mean or intend by spiritual purification within the veil, since we shall not then be in possession of a mortal body to suffer torments, neither can we conceive the idea of any wish to escape this means for the soul's maturity. Rather we should regard it both as felt to be necessary and willingly accepted: and, moreover, as of an entirely spiritual character: so that, even if the word "purgatory" is

purgatorial pain which would otherwise be due on account of sin. How this "commercial theory of satisfaction" affected the mind of the Church, and to what extent it prevailed, pre-reformation history sadly shows.* By an easy and almost natural transition this idea of a remission of penalties for sin by grants of Papal indulgence, made from this "treasury of merit," passed into and formulated a new doctrine of purgatory. For the mere idea of final and disciplinary purification in the Intermediate State which had hitherto possessed the mind of the Church did not furnish a sufficiently powerful inducement to purchase a soul's escape from such consequences. Conceptions therefore of horrible suffering, of souls plunged in material fire,† of unbearable and ghastly torment in lurid flames were freely formulated and rhetorically employed to produce consternation about the condition of the departed, and thus to create a brisk sale of the indulgences which would grant deliverance from such pains and penance. (See, on this whole subject, Pusey's "Eirenicon," I., pp. 198-205.)

It is only right to distinguish the Tridentine Doctrine of Purgatory from this which our 22nd article condemns:

The Council of Trent, as Dr. Pusey points out, "states a minimum as to the doctrine of the Western Church," viz.: "There is a purgatory, and the souls detained there are helped by the prayers of the faithful and the acceptable sacrifice of the altar."

The Roman Church, it is stated, do not demand "any belief of the *opinion* that the souls there are punished by material fire." (Milner, end of contr., letter 43, note 2.) But if so, they contradict the express words of the Tridentine Catechism, which are as follows:—"There is a purgatorial fire in which the souls of the pious are tormented for a certain time, and expiated, in order that an entrance may be open to them into their eternal home where nothing defiled can enter." (See Pusey's "Eirenicon," I., p. 195.)

The Council of Trent pronounced an anathema against all who reject their dogma of purgatory. It was thus stated in the canons and decrees:—"Whereas the Catholic Church, instructed by the Holy Ghost, has, from the sacred writings and the ancient traditions of the Fathers, taught in sacred councils, and very recently in the Œcumenical Synod, that there is a purgatory . . . the Holy Synod enjoins on bishops that they diligently endeavour that the sound doctrine concerning

* See Dean Plumptre's "Spirits in Prison," art. x., for a summary of this history.

† Thomas Aquinas (qu. 70, 3), Bonaventura (comp. theol. verit., 7, 2), Bellarmín (De Purgatorio), and others believed that the fire of purgatory is material. The Tridentine Catechism teaches: "there is a purgatorial fire in which the souls of the *pious* are tormented for a certain time, and expiated in order that an entrance may be open to them into their eternal home where nothing defiled can enter."

The Greek Church formally rejected the doctrine of material fire, and hold only, as stated by S. Macarius of Egypt, that there is spiritual pain for some souls. (See Dr. Pusey, "What is of Faith," pp. 222, 223.)

employed to express the discipline, it must be "in a purely spiritual sense," as "one designed for the purifying of the soul."*

Care, again, is necessary in order to grasp the true sense of the word purification. By it we convey no idea of *probation*, since all probation takes place, so far as we know, on this side of the grave. Probation is meant to work a change quite different from that which we are contemplating. Probation points to a change in purpose, as distinct from a change resulting in development and maturity. The latter is all we contend for: and even then, more as a probability than as an ascertained truth. It is of fundamental importance that we should avoid all suspicion of countenancing the idea either that earthly probation can be inadequate, or that there is a prospect of making up for any such deficiency of probation hereafter. On both these points we advance no opinion whatever.†

purgatory be believed, maintained, taught, and everywhere proclaimed by the faithful of Christ" (Sessio xxv., cf. Schaff Creeds ii., p. 198).

The following statement of the doctrine is given in "Faith of the Catholics," Bennington and Kirk, London, 1846, vol. iii., ed. iii.:—"Catholics hold that there is a purgatory, *i.e.*, a place or state where souls departing this life with remission of their sins as to the guilt or eternal pain, but yet liable to some temporary punishment, still remaining due, or not perfectly free from the blemish of some defects which we call venial sins, are purged before their admittance into heaven, where nothing that is defiled can enter." See also "The Prisoners of the King," by the Rev. H. J. Coleridge, S.J.

The Greek Church also asserts a belief in a purgatory in the following terms:—"That the souls of some, *i.e.*, of those who die in faith and repentance, but without having had time in their life to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance, and consequently to merit from God a complete pardon for all their sins, and to be actually purified from them, undergo torments till they are adjudged worthy of such a pardon and are duly purified" (Macarius, Bishop of Vinnitza, quoted by Dean Plumptre, art. x.) Comp. the Orthodox Confession of the Eastern Church, qu. lxvi.; also "Schaff's Creeds," vol. ii., pp. 345, 504. An unsuccessful effort was made in the Council of Florence to persuade the Greek Church to adopt the Roman doctrine of purgatory (Hook's Church Dict., art. "Purgatory").

* Martensen, "Christian Dogmatics," p. 457, sec. 276.

† See *Contemporary Review*, May 1878; also Dean Plumptre's "Spirits in Prison," chap. xiii.; also *Church Quarterly*, vol. xxii., art. "Hades and Gehenna." Archdeacon Farrar and Dean Plumptre are in this matter at issue with the late Dr. Pusey, who considers that to substitute future probation for that of purification, is to be out of "harmony with the whole of Christendom."

Further, we attempt no speculations about the length of time necessary and appointed for such spiritual purification hereafter, or, in fact, about other limitations connected with it. As regards the time, we admit no such ideas of its abbreviation, as are held in the Roman Church to be possible through the efficacy of prayer, the sacrifice of the mass, and the purchase of indulgences. The only abbreviation, we can contemplate with any certainty, is that which might follow upon a perfect submission to the Divine will and purpose, appointing the means by which such a work of development and perfection may be most speedily accomplished.* Neither do we profess to say for whom such purification is needed; it may be for some, it may be for all.†

Finally, we venture no suggestion as to the method and instrumentality of this work of spiritual progress. The Roman Church would teach that angels take part in this work, and that, as Purgatory is especially the kingdom of the Blessed Virgin Mary, ‡ so the souls therein will receive aid from her; they make distinction between sins venial and sins mortal, and confine all remedial discipline to the purging away of the former; they profess to determine the length of time that souls will be there, and so complete their doctrine of purgatorial discipline. But here we cannot follow them. All that we can conclude, from our consideration and examination of this part of the subject, is, that there is a certain body of revelation with regard to the Intermediate State which makes the idea of a progress after death towards greater perfection extremely probable, and

* "We shall be content to leave the whole work of discipline to the Great Teacher, the whole remedial process to the Great Healer."—Dean Plumptre.

† The Roman doctrine led as its natural consequence to the idea that the saints were excluded from Purgatory, that they entered immediately the state of beatification: and upon this is founded other false teaching of the invocation of saints and saint worship. That the saints do not enjoy the vision of God until after the general judgment, is asserted by Irenæus, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Clemens Romanus, Origen, Ambrose, S. Chrysostom, and many other Fathers and leading Divines of the Church. See Bishop Harold Browne, Art xxii., for reference.

‡ See Dr. Pusey's "Eirenicon," I., p. 196.

which opens out a possibility of souls, in that epoch of life, undergoing a disciplinary treatment whereby they will become better fitted for the Beatific vision and for the life of Heaven. Not that anyone should incautiously presume upon this future possibility, and delay repentance, in the hope of finding a *locus penitentiae* hereafter. This we cannot allow, since the hope for which we contend does not meet their case. Such hope is only held out to those, whose circumstances of present life have been spiritually adverse to such perfection as we contemplate is fitting and necessary, for future and final glorification.

Hence, we advance the conclusion that spiritual progress in the Intermediate State has on its side a weight of probable evidence which removes it out of the scale of mere conjectural hypothesis. The necessities of the case, and the known law of development which governs life both now and hereafter, pronounce in favour of the supposition. The Revelation of God clearly establishes the possibility, and in certain passages seems by inference to imply its very certainty. Patristic authority may be uncertain, but it is not silent on its behalf. The method of its accomplishment is intelligible. And therefore we pronounce in its favour, without much fear of contradiction, provided that the limitations we have made are understood and always recognised.

Thus, the premise of our argument in its three considerations has, we maintain, been established, and we declare our belief in a conscious and progressive life in the Intermediate State.

This being conceded we proceed to show, that it becomes *a reasonable argument, in support of the ancient authorised practice of prayer for the dead.*

Now, in entering upon the subject of this argument, it is well that we should form some clear conception of the manner and condition of the life of the blessed dead, as it may be thought of at this present moment. If we grant our previous conclusions, we shall picture to our-

selves the departed dwelling in a fair and pleasant Paradise, vested in some bodily attire, and beholding the near Presence of Christ. They have not yet reached the ideal of perfection, though they are gradually drawing towards it ; but neither in knowledge nor in happiness, neither in intellectual development, nor in bodily organisation, are they at present perfect. They share, with some degree of sympathy and interest in our life on earth, and are not unmindful of our existence and necessities. But at the same time, their life imperfect as it may be, is one of singular felicity and brightness, for they wait, in silent expectation, the sound of the trumpet which shall announce the dawn of the Resurrection Day, and the glorious consummation and restitution of all things. Though freed from the arduous labours and fierce conflicts of earth, they are not idle. They have abundant occupation. In the light of a fuller revelation they can deepen self-knowledge, perfect repentance, and prepare for the celestial life before them. Their intercourse with Christ, and with one another, is of the most intimate kind. Their mind is constantly hallowed by the sense of the Divine Presence. They are released from the agonies and uncertainties which beset the lives of the holiest of men on earth. They are at perfect rest. And this is no mere bodily rest. There is also for them that *spiritual* rest which comes from a *certain salvation*, for, as it has been said, "the most imperfect souls, even while they have not the advantage of the full sight of God, have unspeakable joy—joy beyond all possible joy in this present life, from the certainty of their salvation, from their being confirmed in grace and love, from the impossibility of their ever again, by the very slightest motion of their will, willing anything but the all-holy will of God."* Besides the calm and elevated studies which the constant meditation and contemplation of Divine things must promote, they pursue a life of worship, and devout intercession : and find, it may be, unspeakable pleasure in hearing the truths of God set forth,

* Dr. Pusey, "What is of Faith," 1881, p. 121.

and in singing His praise. Possibly the task of special prayer is given them on behalf of some of the manifold interests left behind on earth : and whilst they thus pass their life, they become more and more conscious of a sublime uplifting to God Himself, as the veils spread over the scene of Paradise gradually fade away like the mist in the sunlight dawn, and God becomes "all in all."

Such would seem, to our present imagination, to be a picture of the life in the Intermediate State, painted without romance and fancy colouring, and only, as it is foreshadowed in the thought and expectation of Divine revelation. As we contemplate it with reverence and joy, may we not reasonably ask of what service can any prayer be to those who are in the midst of all this enjoyment and felicity? What more do they want which they do not now possess? Is there anything further to ask God to give them?

Our first endeavour, therefore, will be to consider the necessity for such inquiries : for there can be no *reasonable* argument urged for prayer, unless the necessities of the case can be shown to demand it.

Now, all prayer, in the abstract, is the spontaneous act of dependence upon God, manifested in giving expression to certain desires which are felt within the soul : desires, moreover, which cannot be gratified except by the intervention of some power ruling those circumstances over which we have no complete control. Prayer consists in calling this power to our aid, and in formulating a request for the determination of these circumstances. Thus, prayer premises the impotence of man, and the almighty power and will of God, and for its fulfilment demands an acknowledgment of the one, and an absolute faith in the other.

Moreover, we understand of the will of God that it is (i.) *benevolent*, or, in other words, that it cannot inflict loss or injury ; that (ii.) it always confers blessing, and not a curse : being, in this respect, a distinct contrast to the will of man, which is frequently short-sighted, self-pleasing, and therefore,

often injurious; and (iii.) that it is so absolutely impartial, that no charge of prejudice or injustice can ever be brought against it. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right"?* This being the nature of the Divine will, we discover the two principles which must guide its determinations, viz., perfect equity and perfect expediency. This will of God, then—benevolent, loving, and impartial—we invoke, and seek by our prayers to bring into operation. Moreover, when we appeal to God for its exercise, we base our appeal, on the ground of the two principles which are known to govern it.

Before, therefore, we can pray aright, we require to ascertain what is the will of God with regard to our requests, lest we should outrage our privilege by asking anything that might be contrary to His will, and controvert the revealed principles of its working.

We consider, then, in the first place, with regard to prayer for the dead, the question of God's will in the matter. What is this will of God which we seek to bring into exercise, when we so pray on their behalf? Is there for the departed such a Divine will to which we can appeal?

Now, one principal desire of God for all mankind, is *sanctification*,† and inasmuch as no man can see God hereafter "without holiness," we come to regard this sanctity as an essential for the Beatific vision, and consequently, as always a proper subject for prayer: so that, whether we make our petition for this on behalf of the living, or of the blessed dead, we know that we must, in so doing, be *in agreement with the Divine will*. Besides, such a request will be expedient for all times and conditions of life. The need of more perfect holiness, we believe, will be felt in Paradise quite as much, and perhaps even more, than it is on earth: and therefore, to ask God to grant such a request on behalf of those who have entered into rest cannot appear inexpedient. Neither, again, is it contrary to Divine justice. This might be the case if every possible opportunity

* Gen. xviii. 25. † 1 Thess. iv. 3; Lev. xx. 7; Heb. xii. 14.

of becoming holy were granted to souls on earth. But man's fallen nature seems to forbid this possibility. Holiness in degree we may reach on earth, but holiness in perfection we cannot. For, although the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, and the secret workings of supernatural grace may, and often do produce a very high degree of sanctity and perfection, still there must inevitably be, in these respects, a great falling-short of the glory of God. Hence, if the Divine claim for man be perfect holiness (S. Matt. v. 48; Lev. xx. 7), it is only just that we should continue even after death to ask for his sanctification. We therefore conclude, that to pray for growth in holiness on behalf of the dead, is both right and expedient, as well as in agreement with the known will of God.

And the will of God for man is that he should attain perfect *happiness*. Ever since the breath of life entered into the first human being, and God placed Adam in Eden, this has been found to be the Divine intention. The whole Being of the Godhead expends itself, if we may use the expression, in a supreme effort to accomplish such happiness: the Father by His Love, the Son by His Atonement, the Holy Ghost by His Personal Indwelling. Now, in what the true happiness of man consists there can be, or at least there should be, no difference of opinion. Assuredly, it is in God Himself. The more, therefore, we know God, the greater will be our happiness. Here, then, we have a second subject for reasonable and legitimate prayer on behalf of the dead brought under our notice, viz., that this will of God, for the happiness of His creatures, may be accomplished in their being drawn closer to Himself, and so finding, in the increased knowledge of Him, the completeness of spiritual joy and felicity. But is this, we ask again, *expedient* prayer? This, of course, will depend on the knowledge of God which we now possess, on our capacity to receive more, and on the use we could make of such increased knowledge. Both the nature of the case, and the limits of revelation show that present acquaintance

with God is far from satisfactory.* The limitation of the human mind and the mystery of the Being of God Himself are barriers which must, always in the present life, stand in the way of anything like a complete knowledge of God. We are reminded continually of our ignorance in this matter, and can trace much of our present unhappiness to it. It is because we do not understand God's dealings with us, or cannot follow His instructions, or find it impossible to interpret His will, that we are led into fretful rebellion, into disobedience, into impatience, into misunderstandings: and all these imperfections of knowledge, and of will, become a fruitful source of unhappiness in present time.† Therefore we agree that *it is expedient* to pray that the souls of the blessed dead may increase in happiness, by attaining to a fuller knowledge of God, and a clearer insight into His Being. Neither can such prayer be *contrary to the divine justice*: for God would have all men come to the knowledge of Himself,‡ and has no desire that any should remain in ignorance of Him. He wills to reveal Himself, and has not left Himself anywhere "without witness."§ Hence, we conclude that in asking for that increased happiness for the departed, which is attainable through the greater knowledge of the Being and Majesty of God, we are asking not only for what is just and expedient, but also for that which is in perfect agreement with the Divine will.

A third will of God for mankind is *that His revealed purpose in man's creation should be accomplished*. Now, the single, distinct, and Divine object of the life of everyone born into the world, is the glory of God.|| But this, again, so far as we can form a judgment, is a purpose which cannot be effected perfectly on earth, neither does it seem necessary, since it is an end in view, which has its beginning in this life, but which meets its fulfilment in the ages of eternity. No life,

* cf. Job xi 7.

† Thus S. Augustine, "Confessions": "For Thyself hast Thou made us, and unquiet is the heart of man until it rest in Thee."

‡ 1 Tim. ii. 4. § Acts xiv. 17. || 1 Cor. xi. 7. 1 Cor. x. 31.

of whatever sort it be, can be regarded from God's point of view as objectless life. And the life of the blessed in Paradise, equally with their life on earth, and in heaven, has, we may be sure, some definite purpose to fulfil, even though we may not be able to determine the nature and the method of its fulfilment. If, therefore, the Divine glory be the single purpose of man's life in its relation to God, (and we know no other purpose), then we may rightly maintain, that prayer for the fulfilment of this Divine purpose on behalf of the dead, is legitimate. Certainly it cannot be inexpedient; certainly it is not unjust; certainly it is not contrary to the Divine will.

Hence, so far as the reasonableness of prayer for the dead is concerned—prayer for their increase in holiness, prayer for their greater happiness, prayer for their fulfilment of life's Divine purpose—inasmuch as all such prayer is in agreement with a beneficent will of God for mankind, and is shown to be both just and expedient, we argue in its favour, and fail to see any condemnation of its practice.

Moreover, if we understand rightly, it is in these particulars that prayer will be an advantage to the blessed dead. Bright, joyous, and happy as their condition may be, still, on our showing there is a distinct possibility of spiritual progress being made: and, moreover, such progress lies in the direction of an advancement in sanctification and felicity, as well as of a gradual approach to the Beatific vision of God.

If, therefore, prayers for the dead be allowable, if it be no intrusion upon the Divine counsels, if there be no express veto put upon it in the revelation of God, we can, on the supposition of a conscious and progressive life in the Intermediate State, see both a distinct scope for its exercise, and a clear reason for its practice.

One thing is perfectly certain. Prayer for the dead is not forbidden in Holy Scripture,* and therefore, unless we

* So, Canon Kingsley, "From Death to Life," sermon iv., "We are not absolutely forbidden to pray for the dead, in Holy Scripture."

adopt the unsafe maxim that omission is prohibition, we cannot on this ground argue against it.

The evidence of Revelation in support of the practice, is certainly very slight indeed, and in its nature much more indirect than direct. Here we agree entirely with those * who lay especial stress on the silence of Christ with regard to the subject. There is hardly any reason to doubt that He would have been carefully taught to use such prayers, since it was part of the practice and belief of all pious Jews at that time ;† and if such prayers had not His approval, then it seems hardly likely that He would have allowed them the countenance of His silence. Certainly He did not withhold an adverse judgment in those other matters of Jewish religious practice with which He did not agree, as, for instance, the observance of the Sabbath, and the minute exaction of tithe when unaccompanied by moral strictness in more important things. And therefore it is difficult to see how He could, consistently with His practice, have done so in the present instance. Moreover, as it has been shown, the petition of His own prayer, "Thy kingdom come," when carefully understood, is in a certain sense a direct sanction for such prayer.‡ Beyond, however, this almost silent testimony of Christ, there is very little further evidence of Holy Scripture to be advanced, in favour of the practice which can in any sense be accounted reliable. The earliest known instance of such

* See Canon Luckock's "After Death," chapter v., where "Our Lord's silence is interpreted as a sign of Divine acquiescence."

† In support of this we would refer (i.) to the well-known passage in the book of the Maccabees (2 Maccab. xii. 39 *fn.*), (ii.) to the Jewish Liturgies still extant, (iii.) to Jewish monumental inscriptions especially in Rome, (iv.) to the Rules of the Rabbis with regard to the Kaddisch, or prayer for the souls of the deceased, to be used by the next of kin for 11 months after death. See an interesting sample of such a prayer in Plumptre's "Spirits in Prison," p. 267. Also on the whole note, see Canon Luckock's "After Death," chapter v., and Dean Plumptre's "Spirits in Prison," chapter ix.

‡ "Christ Himself provides and sanctions such prayer" (viz., "for perfect fruition of bliss"), when He teaches us to pray "Thy Kingdom come." Twelve addresses by Dr. Christopher Wordsworth, Bishop of Lincoln (London, 1873). Also Canon Luckock would find similar sanction in our Lord's statement about the forgiveness of sins in S. Matt. xii. 31, 32.

prayer in Holy Scripture is thought by some to occur in the words of one of the "Songs of Ascent": "Lord, remember for David all his affliction,"* and the latest is said to be S. Paul's request for Onesiphorus: "the Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord."† But even in these and any other equally doubtful passages,‡ there is but slender evidence for the support of any doctrine of intercession for the departed, such as might sanction its legitimacy, or make it obligatory on the Christian conscience.

But, although the direct evidence of Holy Scripture be of this imperfect kind, we cannot fail to notice, that *indirectly* there is much which might be urged in favour of the practice being in agreement with Divine revelation.

It should here be observed that we hold no brief in support of anything like unlimited prayer, either in regard to those for whom we pray, or to the things for which we pray.

With reference to the former—those for whom we pray—we confine prayer to the case of such as are departed in the "faith and fear" of our Lord.§ And, moreover, we advance no argument in favour of any such idea of intercession as

* R.V. of Ps. cxxxii. 1.

† 2 Tim. i. 18. There is a great dispute whether Onesiphorus were really dead or not. Some modern commentators, as Bengel, De Wette, Alford, Ellicott, urge that this was the case. It does not, however, follow that S. Paul's prayer is more than one for a joyful resurrection, even if Onesiphorus were dead. See Bishop Wordsworth, *Twelve Addresses*, and cf. Jeremy Taylor, vol. vi., p. 453, sermon viii. (on 2 Sam. xiv. 14). Also same writer on *Purgatory*, vol. xi., p. 58.

‡ For instance, the curious practice of vicarious baptism for the dead mentioned in 1 Cor. xv. 29.

§ All the most ancient liturgies where such prayers are recorded, observe this limitation—*e.g.*, (i.) Jerusalem Liturgy (*Assem. Cod. Lit. v. 46*): "Remember, O Lord God, . . . those of a *right faith* . . . from Abel the just to this day." (ii.) Clementine Liturgy: "all Thy saints *who have pleased Thee* from the beginning of the world." (iii.) Alexandrine Liturgy (*Assem. Cod. Lit. vii. 24-26*): "the souls of our fathers and brethren who have fallen asleep before us in the faith of Christ." (iv.) Liturgy of Constantinople: "all who are fallen asleep before us in the hope of the resurrection unto eternal life." (vi.) Sacramentary of S. Gregory, op. iii., p. 11.: "Thy servants and handmaidens who have gone before us with the seal of faith, and sleep in the sleep of peace." See also *Primitive Liturgies translated*, London, 1859, by John Mason Neale.

might imply a sanction for the invocation of the dead, or an invitation to them to pray on our behalf: though it is scarcely unreasonable to think that they will continue to pray for us in Paradise as they did when they were upon earth.* And with reference to the latter—viz., the subject-matter of such prayer—we advance no authority for asking or expecting miracles. With God, certainly, all things are possible, but we cannot, in this direction, go further than the known limitations of the case, already asserted to be, on the one hand, the sphere of the revealed will of God, and on the other a perfect agreement with the laws of Divine expediency and justice. We venture to assert that all prayer is legitimate which is contained within these limits, whether it be offered for the living or departed. We maintain no such doctrine of prayer for the dead as might induce a hope that by its means we may obtain relief from purgatorial pains (if such there be). We confess no faith in masses for the dead, and in the sacrifice of the altar as of any force of atonement for the sins which have been committed on earth.† We ask none to pray for the

* Against any teaching of the invocation of the saints there are two passages of conclusive authority in S. Athanasius and S. Augustine, the one (Athanasius, *Contra Arian*, orat. iii., vol. i., p. 582) where he expressly says, "we invoke no one of his creatures, nor any mere man, but the Son of God"; the other (S. Augustine, *De Verit. Relig.*, vol. i., column 786) in which S. Augustine pronounces against "the cultus of dead men . . . who are to be honoured on account of imitation, not to be prayed to on account of religion." See other passages from Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Origen, quoted by Bishop Harold Browne, art. xxii.

† We have, in this matter, two great authorities in conflict, since Faber (*Diff. Rom.*, p. 149) repudiates the assertion of Neale that, "the oblation of the Blessed Sacrament for the dead has been from the beginning the practice of the Universal Church" (*Primitive Liturgies*, app. ii., p. 216), and maintains that "oblations" for the dead were, at first certainly, only such offerings of thanksgiving, praise, and alms. The formula (*προσφέρειν*) for such offerings is certainly found, in many places, in immediate connection with ordinary prayers. There is, of course, a wide difference between the Mass for the dead as an oblation for atonement, and the celebration of the Blessed Sacrament on their behalf as only an oblation of thanksgiving and intercession. We have no wish whatever to suggest any disclaimer against this latter practice, but should rather uphold it. S. Cyril of Jerusalem says, "Very great will be the benefit to those souls for which prayer is offered at the moment when the holy and tremendous sacrifice is lying in view" (*Lect. Mys.* v. 9). And with regard to the former, we venture no opinion either way, since it opens up one most difficult side of the doctrine of the Eucharist.

reversal of a just sentence waiting to be passed in the Day of Judgment, though we still re-echo S. Paul's prayer for Onesiphorus, "that he may find mercy in that day." We ask for no curtailing, and abbreviation of the purification* necessary for the perfection of a soul, though, as we lay the bodies of our departed brethren in their earthly resting-place, we pray "that we, with all those that are departed in the true faith of Thy Holy Name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in Thy eternal and everlasting glory." Finally, we plead for no absolution of the *impenitent* who die in sin,† although, for the penitent and believing, we ask for them, and for the whole Church, "that they may obtain remission of their sins, and all other benefits of His Passion."‡ These we regard to be the due and proper limitations of the subject of prayer for the dead, as it falls within the scope of our Essay. And, certainly, by keeping within these boundaries we do not transgress, so far as we know, the teaching of Divine revelation, but rather, we confess ourselves to be *indirectly* in agreement with it.

But an even more important consideration will be found in the bearing of the subject of intercession, in relation to what

* Such abbreviation of purification is, of course, different from the shortening of the waiting time of all souls in Paradise, *i.e.*, of the Intermediate State itself, which some think is the idea of Rev. vi. 20, and can be accomplished by the prayers of the survivors on earth. See Pusey, "What is of Faith" p. 125. S. Basil the Great, in his Prayers for Pentecost, says, "That the Lord vouchsafe to receive from us propitiatory prayer and sacrifice for those that are kept in Hades, and allow us the hope of obtaining for them peace, relief, and freedom."

† See a chapter on the inefficacy of prayer for those who die in wilful sin, in Canon Luckcock's "After Death."

‡ Bishop Cosin distinctly interprets this petition in our Post-Communion Prayer as an Intercession, not only for the Church Militant, but for all who are "*resting in the sleep of peace.*" I should like to record here a prayer which I lately found amongst the papers of a late colonel in the army, a prayer on behalf of his wife who died August 27th, 1811: "Be merciful, O Lord, unto Thy servant whom Thou hast been most graciously pleased to deliver from the miseries of this sinful world. Vouchsafe, O God, to cleanse and purify her soul, that, her sins being forgiven her through Thy bountiful goodness and mercy, she may prove acceptable in Thy sight, and finally be made partaker of Thine eternal glory and everlasting life, through the all-sufficient merits and sufferings of Thy Beloved Son, our Saviour, Mediator, and Redeemer, Jesus Christ our Lord."

has been revealed with regard to the possibility of any Divine *response* being granted to prayer on behalf of the dead.

Now, the chief use of all intercession is, of course, to obtain an answer, and the answer must depend on the likelihood of the request being granted. We might, of course, think of a further use for prayer in the present case, separate from this consideration of response. There is, we know, a memorial aspect of the subject, as serving to keep us in mind of the existence of those who have left the earth.* And, in fact, much of the prayer for the dead is of the nature of commemoration. Or, we might even regard such prayer in the light of an act of common gratitude for all the benefits inherited by the Church and the world from our saintly ancestors and benefactors. But, although these varieties of interpretation may add weight to our argument, they still leave untouched the question of reasonableness in the matter.

The true issue is found in the inquiry, does God answer prayer in the Intermediate State? Is He likely to do so? And, are the conditions of life such as would justify our expectation that He will do so? The answer we would return to these questions is as decisive as it could be, short of the support of express Revelation. Yes, certainly yes—God is the Providential Governor of the entire universe, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth. All that happens is of Him, and from Him. And therefore the life in Paradise, as well as the life on earth must be under His immediate government and control. And, if this be the case, then, we ask, on what principle does God conduct His rule of the universe? Is He arbitrary or considerate? Does He regard the will of His creatures, or does He set it aside? Certainly the only method of Divine government which we know to be

* There is an interesting sermon on "The Commemoration of the Blessed Dead," preached by Charles Kingsley, on the death of the Right Honourable Thomas Erskine, 1865; also sermon on All Saints' Day and "Presence in Absence," in "All Saints' Day and other sermons," by the same writer. See, further, on this subject, "The Difficulties of Romanism," by G. S. Faber (London, 1830), and Bishop Harold Browne, art. xxii.

adopted by God, is that which exhibits an absolute respect for human free will. God does not manifest Himself as forcing His will in contravention, or in violence to the will of man. He waits to execute His counsels, until some desire, directly or indirectly, is expressed on the part of His creatures.* So that, in a word, the Magna Charta of Divine government is, "Ask, and it shall be given you."† And, attached to man's compliance with this duty, is the unalterable pledge of God's will: "Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."‡ Hence, the will of God for the souls in Paradise, on the hypothesis that there is but one immutable and fixed law for its operation and expression, must, we imagine, be determined, as in present time, in certain agreement with the will of man, as it is expressed by means of prayer. Now, whether souls in Paradise pray for themselves (and it is hard to conceive of their not doing so) is not the present question. If we once introduce the necessity for prayer into the life of the departed, there can be no logic in denying a place for prayer on their behalf to those who are living on earth. We therefore conclude, that we are still in agreement with Revelation when we assert, that the will of man may be permitted to have the same place in determining the counsels of God in Paradise as it holds on earth: that prayer regulates the settlement of those counsels both in the visible and invisible worlds, and that there is the same likelihood that prayer will be accepted and answered in relation to the one as in relation to the other.§

Again, a third agreement indirectly with Revelation on this

* "There is a recognised principle running through Holy Scripture, and illustrated by the common experience of God's dealings with us, that He has chosen that the destiny of man, for weal or woe, shall be influenced by the conduct of his fellow-men." Canon Luckock, "After Death," p. 50.

† S. Matt. vii. 7. ‡ S. Matt. xxi. 22.

§ It is, as we have already shown, a mistaken conception of Paradise that it is a place of fixed reward, and of final settlement, so that the souls therein have no chance of improvement and change. Else we might agree with Charles Kingsley that prayers for the dead are an "impertinence" and unnecessary. ("From Death to Life," p. 54.)

subject of prayer for the dead, is found in the nature of the case itself.

For, on the highly probable assumption, which we have previously made, that there is a continuance, and what we may even call a sequence, of Divine government in the future world, we see a way in which, even now, we quite unconsciously, but nevertheless quite truly, are found to be praying for the dead.

By far the greater number of petitions for spiritual things which we lay at God's feet in present time on behalf of ourselves and others remain unanswered at the hour of death. Yet are we to believe that therefore of necessity they will never be answered? Is prayer such a fruitless task as this might lead us to imagine? Nay, do we not frequently console ourselves (and that with truth) with the reflection that God has an eternity in which to answer our prayers whenever we find that He has not answered them in time? Or, in other words, do we not thus unconsciously confess in some sort our belief in prayer being answered for the dead, when in reality we are only praying on their behalf during lifetime? So it is, we think, if we think seriously at all, that prayer in time may meet with its answer in eternity, and, on the strength of this thought, we continue our intercessions until the moment when breath leaves the body. And if so, where is the logic in ceasing to pray further from that instant? If we believe that God will and does answer prayer in the next world, when such prayer has been offered for any in their lifetime, then where is the reason for our thinking that He will not answer the prayer which follows them when they have quitted the world? Nay, rather, if we thus believe that we may pray for the dead whilst they are still living on earth, is it not equally reasonable for us to believe that we can pray for them when they are actually dead? It cannot be urged, on the contrary side, that the dead are unable to say "Amen" to such prayers, and therefore are not in a position to assent to the petitions offered on their behalf: since this is an objection which, if true, would tell

equally against all intercessory prayer, whether for the living or departed. Rather, on the presumption, as we have shown, that our prayers are in agreement with the will, love, and justice of God, then, assuredly, it will need no endorsement of the human heart and lip to ensure the answer to be forthcoming, and its benefit received by the one on whose behalf the petition is made.

One further point. Prayer is frequently defined as the expression of the heart's desire ; and, granting this, is there, we ask, no yearning over the departed awaiting some expression ? no bidding of the heart's desire craving to be heard on their behalf ? We know that it is the contrary. Then, how hard it would seem if we were compelled to check these risings of secret heartfelt entreaty to God, and to pronounce them sinful ! It is something more than mere human instinct which prompts this inward wish to assist the dead even when we have performed the last offices for them on earth. God, assuredly, has some part or lot in this matter. The same inspiration from above which moves upon the face of all other desire for Divine assistance, in order to quicken it into life and expression, is striving here also to co-operate with us. And we can only conclude that the very presence of this longing to assist the blessed dead with prayer, is not planted within the soul for disappointment, but rather, we must believe that God intends it should be gratified, and will be as ready to meet it with His favour, as any other similar desire expressed for the soul's welfare during our lifetime on earth.*

And if we thus state the nature of the case fairly with regard to prayer for the dead, when we argue that it is both in agreement with a recognised belief in God, as the Governor of the entire universe, and is also the satisfaction of an instinct

* "There is, so far as I know, no direct evidence as to the time when the thought first entered into the human heart, that the prayers which he had offered for friend or brother during his life need not cease the impulse to pray (*i.e.*, for the dead one) as he had prayed before, in the absence of a direct command to the contrary, would be practically irresistible." (Dean Plumptre, "Spirits in Prison," chap. ix.)

of human nature, we can scarcely argue otherwise, than that it will be acceptable to God, since, under certain limitation, it is not found to be contrary to the spirit of His Revelation, whether directly or indirectly declared.

We have then, so far, seen that prayer for the dead is neither unscriptural, nor unreasonable, nor impossible: it only remains to state that the *ancient authorised practice* of such prayer is in agreement with the conclusion at which we have arrived.

For the practice itself, we have abundant and clearest evidence from the very earliest times.

Ever since the primitive Christians left the record of such prayers traced by them in rude Greek and Latin characters on the walls of the Catacombs, from A.D. 71 to A.D. 410,* the practice has been in use. The ancient liturgies, which cover much the same period of time,† are full of such intercessions,‡ and the primitive Fathers of the Church recognise and support them.§ Thus, we have a very strong link of evidence from the first to the middle of the fifth century, which establishes, beyond dispute, the ancient practice in this respect. The practice is preserved in the beautiful devotions of the Mediæval Church, where, in spite of man's abuse and misconception, its tradition was handed on for more than a thousand years in the solemnities of the All Souls' Festival, the Requiem Mass, the Dirge,

* Canon Luckock, "After Death," chap. vii., says that the *dated* inscriptions hitherto discovered are upwards of 110, although 6,000 are now extant.

† For a description and history of these Liturgies, see Palmer's "Origines Liturgicæ," vol. i., Smith's "Christian Antiquities," art. "Liturgy," and Bingham "Antiquities" (Lond. 1875), p. 572.

‡ Dean Plumptre argues, from this cumulative evidence of the Liturgies of Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Carthage, Gaul, that these prayers "must have been found in the original type of liturgy, of which all these were, each with special variation, natural developments, and which can hardly be assigned to a later period than the age of the Apostles, or that which immediately succeeded it."

§ Tertullian, S. Jerome, Eusebius, S. Chrysostom, Theodoret, Epiphanius, S. Ambrose, S. Augustine, all give testimony to the use of such prayers.

and the Recitation of the Psalter for the Departed,* and, moreover, has been continued almost to the present day, receiving the support of such familiar names as Bishops Andrewes, Cosin, Barrow, and Ken ; John Wesley, Reginald Heber, and John Keble.†

Returning once more to the ancient practice of such prayer, we further need to inquire into the subject-matter of the intercession. For what did the ancients pray on behalf of the dead ?

The prayers on the walls of the Catacombs are, as we should expect in such early times, not offered in any definite form, but are mostly a simple expression of fervent hope and ejaculation, not unlike our common "requiescat in pace." In fact, the formula "in pace" placed after the name of the deceased is of frequent occurrence, though sometimes there is added to it the desire for refreshment of soul,‡ and sometimes in its stead we find expressed the desire for "light," "union with God," and "life with the saints."§

In the earliest Liturgies of the ancient Church we find some expansion of the primitive practice. The connection of prayer is always, then, with the Eucharistic Sacrifice, so that it becomes linked with the great Intercession of the Head of the Church, with which at such time our petitions are

* See also the famous treatise of S. Catherine of Genoa, attributed to S. Anselm, and quoted by Dr. Pusey in his "Eirenicon," part iii., p. 108.

† See Canon Luckock for passages, pp. 247-252. Also an interesting reference to Dr. Johnson's opinion on the subject in his "Life" by Boswell.—*Boswell*: "What do you think, Sir, of purgatory as believed by the Roman Catholics?" *Johnson*: "Why, Sir, it is a very harmless doctrine. They are of opinion that the generality of mankind are neither so obstinately wicked as to deserve everlasting punishment, nor so good as to merit being admitted into the society of blessed spirits ; and therefore that God is graciously pleased to allow of a middle state, where they may be purified by certain degrees of suffering. You see, Sir, *there is nothing unreasonable in this.*" *Boswell*: "But then, Sir, their masses for the dead?" *Johnson*: "Why, Sir, if it be once established that there are souls in purgatory, it is as proper to pray for *them*, as for our brethren of mankind who are yet in *this life.*"

‡ *E.g.*, "Hilaris, vivas cum tuis feliciter semper refrigeris in pace Dei."

§ Canon Luckock's able collection of these inscriptions in his "After Death" furnishes abundant and typical examples, pp. 93-97.

associated. There is not, as yet, any mention made of sin, nor any pleading for the forgiveness of sin, the prominent ideas of such intercession being mainly those of commemoration and of rest.*

In the later Liturgies, both of the East and West, in those of the Syrian Church, and in the three chief Sacramentaries of S. Leo, S. Gelasius, and S. Gregory, intercession for sin began to be introduced: not, however, so much with a view to the pardon for sin, but rather for the obliteration of any stain of defilement, which it might have left upon the soul.†

In the Fathers, again, we find similar testimony to prayers for the peace and refreshment of departed souls, accompanied with express intercession for the pardon of their sins of ignorance and of lesser (*i.e.*, venial) import.‡

Of this nature are the prayers for the dead which have come down to us with the authority of primitive and ancient tradition. They are prayers for the peace and refreshment of departed souls, prayers for the effacement of all stains of sin which, whilst remaining, would mar the bliss of Paradise, prayers for the absolute pardon of all sins of human infirmity, which, if unremitted, would defeat the purpose of Divine creation, since "nothing that defileth" can possibly enter the abode of God's immediate Presence. And these are prayers, as we have already shown, which neither contradict

* Thus, the Liturgy of S. James (translated by Dean Plumptre), "Remember, O Lord God, the spirits of all flesh, of whom we have made mention, and of whom we have not made mention, from righteous Abel unto this day; unto them do thou give rest there in the land of the living." For other examples see Dean Plumptre and Canon Luckock.

† "Cumula eos lætitia in regione quam illuminat splendor vultus tui, delens prævaricationes eorum, nec intrans in iudicium cum illis; neque enim quisquam purus est a peccato coram te" (Lit. Minor, S Jacobi). Quæsumus, Domine, miserationum tuarum largitate concedes ut quicquid terrena conversatione contraxit his sacrificiis emundetur (Sacr. Leon.)

‡ οὗτος (Theodosius Imp.) . . . ἱκετείαν ὑπὲρ τῶν γεγεννηκότων προσήνεγκε, συγγνώμην τοῖς ἐξ ἀγνοίας ἡδυκηκόσιν ἀντιβολήσας. (Theod. Eccles. Hist. V. c. xxxvi.)

Notandum autem quod et si impii post mortem spes veniæ non est: sunt tamen qui de levioribus peccatis, cum quibus obligati defuncti sunt, post mortem possunt absolvi. (Hieron. in Proverbia, cap. xi. 7.)

the Revelation of God, nor contravene the reason of man. They are not prayers for all, but only for those who are departed this life in the "faith and fear" of the Lord, and for whom as "faithful" we can thank God that they are "in joy and felicity." *

Moreover, we venture to think that these are prayers quite in agreement with the authority, and sanction for their use, still left to us in our Anglican Communion. †

* It might here be urged that the Catholic instinct is to pray for all, even in spite of the limitation of Catholic tradition and practice. The Lord's Prayer is unquestionably a prayer for all, and the Eucharist itself a sacrifice for all. Moreover, it may even be thought that, until the great crisis or separating judgment is revealed, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, we may hope for all. Still, we hardly venture to express that hope in prayer, though we may safely rest upon it our conviction that "the Judge of all the earth" will "do right."

One unanswerable argument for prayer for the dead, which might even seem to make all others superfluous, is, that since Christ's sacrifice was and is for all men, His Priestly Intercession, which is the effectual pleading of that sacrifice, cannot but be in like manner for all.

If, therefore, we should hesitate to make our intercession as comprehensive as His, and to believe not only "the works that I do, shall he do also," but also the prayers that I pray, shall he pray also, if this be so, still it must always be a consolation to remember the all-availing Intercession of Christ, "our Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, Who is the Propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 S. John ii. 1-2.)

† It should be borne in mind that in the First Prayer-book of Edward VI. such prayers were found, and in quite as explicit terms, if not more so, than in any other extant Liturgy,* thus showing the distinct mind of the Church at the commencement of the English Reformation. In the memorable three years following, from 1549 to 1552—years of peril to all distinctive Church truth—years which threatened destruction to all hereditary Church tradition—years which ended, as God in His providence seems to have designed they should end, in a compromise which, although it has never been satisfactory, preserved to our Anglican Communion its historic continuity with the Church of primitive times, at the expense and loss, it is true, of some of its Catholic standpoints in lesser matters of faith and practice—in these three years the first Prayer-book was revised and republished with numerous alterations, and

* Thus, in the Holy Communion Office, comes this prayer: "We commend unto Thy mercy all other Thy servants, which are departed hence from us with the sign of faith, and now do rest in peace. Grant unto them, we beseech Thee, Thy mercy and everlasting peace, and that at the day of general Resurrection, we and all they which be of the mystical body of Thy Son, may altogether be set on His Right Hand." . . . Again, in the Burial Service these prayers are found.

When the body is placed in the grave: "Grant, we beseech Thee, that at the day of judgment his soul, and all the souls of Thy elect departed out of this life, may, with us, and we with them, fully receive Thy promises, and be made perfect together."

"Grant unto this Thy servant, that the sins which he committed in this world be not imputed unto him, but that he, escaping the gates of hell and pains of eternal darkness, may ever dwell in the regions of light." . . . Provision was also made for a celebration of Holy Communion at the burial of the dead, in which the collect, which is in expression much the same as the one in our present Burial Service, which begins, "O merciful God," has this further clause: "We beseech Thee . . . that . . . at the general Resurrection in the last day, both we and this our brother departed, receiving again our bodies and rising again in Thy most gracious favour, may, with all Thine elect saints, obtain eternal joy."

Therefore we finally conclude that, since there is a conscious and progressive life in the Intermediate State, without which, of course, prayer would be unmeaning and unnecessary, and since also a legacy is left to us of ancient authorised prayer which is adapted to the legitimate conception

amongst them the prayers for the departed were modified, and lost much of their distinctive character.*

Moreover, in the original 42 articles, which appeared at the commencement of 1553, no mention whatever is made of prayers for the dead.† Still, the only distinct condemnation of such prayer is found in the third part of the Homily on Prayer, confirmed in 1563—a homily in which occur some strange misquotations of the early Fathers, as well as an absolute denial of any Intermediate State whatever.‡ Again, in what is called the Bidding Prayer, authorised in the 55th canon for use before Sermons, there is certainly a thanksgiving for the dead, and a clause which might easily, without wresting its sense, be regarded as a prayer also on their behalf.§

We come to the final revision in 1662, after the Savoy Conference, which leaves us the Prayer-book which we now have in use. There we have three references to prayer for the dead which, when regarded in the light of their original history, show a distinct authority in their favour, although they are expressed in equivocal terms, so as not to give offence to more scrupulous minds. There is, following upon the commemoration of the blessed dead in the Church Militant Prayer, the petition “that we with them may be made partakers of Thy heavenly kingdom.”|| Again, there is the prayer in the Post-Communion Collect, “that we and all Thy whole Church may obtain remission of our sins, and all other benefits of His Passion.”¶ And, thirdly, there is the familiar prayer in the Burial

* The strong influence of Calvin and Bucer is traceable in this second Prayer-book, and accounts for much of the alteration in this and other respects. Thus, in the Communion Office, all mention of the departed was omitted, nor was any authority retained for a celebration at the time of the Burial of the Dead: moreover, instead of the prayers quoted above from the first Prayer-book, they appear in the Burial Service almost in the same form as they are found now in the two collects, “Almighty God, with whom do live,” and “O merciful God.”

† It is, moreover, important to notice that in the original draft of Art. xxiii. (our present Art. xxii.), “Prayers for the dead” were added among the other doctrines there condemned, but disappeared before the Articles were actually promulgated. Omission, therefore, cannot in this case be interpreted as prohibition.

‡ I refer to the Homily in Dr. Corrie's Edition, where the references are given from the original of S. Chrysostom, S. Cyprian, and S. Augustine. The following quotation from it is certainly as untrue as it is remarkable: “S. Augustine doth only acknowledge two places after this life—heaven and hell. As for the third place, he doth plainly deny that there is any such place to be found in all Scripture.”

§ The clause runs: “Finally, let us . . . pray unto God . . . that this life ended, we may be made partakers *with them* (i.e., the departed) of the glorious resurrection, in the life everlasting.” The Canons Ecclesiastical were agreed upon by the Upper House of Convocation, A.D. 1603, and published by His Majesty's authority.

|| The words “we with them” may be intended, by a somewhat ambiguous phraseology, to mean “we and they.” In which case there would be a distinct prayer for the dead. However, the title of Prayer for the Church Militant would rather exclude such a reference. See Dean Plumtree's “Spirits in Prison,” c. iv., p. 277. Also Canon Luckock, “After Death,” p. 241. Compare the position of “with them” in the bidding prayer quoted above.

¶ Cosin, Bishop of Durham, one of the Committee of Revision of the Prayer-book of 1662, in his second series of Notes on the Prayer-book (Works, vol. v., p. 351), says, “By ‘all the whole Church’ is to be understood as well those that have been heretofore and those that shall be hereafter, as those that are now the present members of it, and ‘by all other benefits of His Passion’ is intended no less the victory that we shall all have over death and sin at the last day . . . than the remission of sins past to be now given us. So that the virtue of this sacrifice (which is here in this prayer of oblation commemorated and represented) doth not only extend itself to the living, but likewise to those that are absent, and those that be already departed, or shall, in time to come, live and die in the faith of Christ.”

of this future life, there is a reasonable argument for the continuance of the practice of praying for the dead, due care being taken to confine such prayers within the limitation of the received traditions which are found to be in agreement with the mind of God expressed in His Revelation.

A few words on our whole subject may find a fitting place at the close of the Essay.

We cannot lift such a veil as we have been attempting to do without thoughts and feelings of the utmost reverence. The place on which we have been standing is, we know, consecrated ground, and a spot where the most hallowed memories of men are to be found. We have certainly no wish to disturb the sacred repose of our conceived Eden.

We have only been looking into the interior of *this* part of man's future home in the hope that the prevailing ignorance about it may be somewhat removed, and we ourselves become more anxious to enter therein. We certainly expect it will prove a home in every sense of the word—a place where the families of earth will assemble, a place of certain recognition and happy society, a place of education, a house of God and of prayer. There, even better than here, we shall know what love is and what life is. And if such be its blessed anticipation, no one need be discouraged or made unhappy, because we have no such prophecy as that which falls from the lips of the visionary and uninstructed, and which promises in Paradise the Beatific Vision, closing the eyes to the true meaning and needful work of our resting-house between death and resurrection.

Service, "that we, with all those that are departed in the true faith of Thy Holy Name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss both in body and soul in Thy eternal and everlasting glory."*

From these prayers we would draw a similar conclusion to that of a writer in the *Church Quarterly*,† viz., that "while the English Church leaves her children perfectly free to pray for the faithful departed in their private devotion, she has so constructed her public services that they can be used by all, whether they adopt or shrink from the practice."

* Canon Luckock, on these words says, "Here 'we with all those' must be equivalent to 'we and all those,' for, if not, the order of words must have been changed, and would have run thus, 'that we may have our perfect consummation and bliss with all those, &c.'"

† April 1880, art. i.

Again, we desire to add a concluding word in justification of the limit which we have set to our consideration of the subject, and to which we have made constant reference. In doing this, we disclaim all intention of passing any unauthorised judgment upon the condition of the dead who are outside the limits of our consideration. Assuredly all such final sentence belongs to God alone, and we can safely leave it in His hands. We feel certain, so far, that no man who has once set his will in opposition to the Divine will, but who has died without his will being so set, can be irrevocably lost to God. Beyond this certain hope we venture no opinion whatever. Only we feel absolutely confident, that when the time comes, the Judge of all the earth will do right, and that His judgment, favourable or adverse, will be justified by the case and accepted without the shadow of a feeling of injustice.

One chief object of this Essay throughout has been to assist to a clearer and more definite conception of the Intermediate State. We have sought to impress the idea of a conscious and of a higher *life* in Paradise, to make it manifest that God is at work there as He is at work on earth, and to picture the condition of souls as still being under His Divine influence. We conjure up the vision of an intelligible scene of life as highly probable within the veil—people its mansions with living persons—mark the workings of system, government, and organisation—recognise possible duties and work—clothe the whole with the reality of revealed truth—have faith in progress and development, brought to pass through Divine instrumentality—conceive of the life of the spirit of man, quickened, as it is now, by the Holy Ghost, constantly attracted to Jesus, strengthened and nourished with Divine grace, purified, sanctified, glorified in a way that is impossible in present time because of the numerous hindrances which stand in the way.

But we still confess our imperfect knowledge, and are compelled to leave our subject as a mine of future revelation unexplored. In fact, this and every other part of the study

of Eschatology is shrouded in mystery, waiting to be made manifest. We have no sufficient data for the construction of any perfect system of future life and future event. We have but flashes of light, which again and again gleam out from the darkness, and throw a brightness here and there upon that shadowy universe where the spirits of the dead are living.

“Darkly we move, we press upon the brink
 Haply of viewless worlds, and know it not.
 Yet, it may be that nearer than we think
 Are those whom death has parted from our lot !
 Fearfully, wondrously our souls are made :
 Let us walk humbly on and undismayed !
 Humbly, for knowledge strives in vain to feel
 Her way amidst these marvels of the mind,
 Yet undismayed, for do they not reveal
 The immortal being with our dust entwined ?”*

And since the life in the Intermediate State appears to be so genuine and so real, and in many respects so similar in its nature to the life in present time, we find a place for prayer on its behalf: not only prayer in the sense of commemoration, for the purpose of preserving our remembrance of, and communion with the predeceased, but also prayer in the sense of definite petition and intercession, by which we plead on behalf of the departed the benefits of the Saviour's Passion, and ask on their behalf for continued peace and joy, for spiritual progress and restoration, for that felicitous repose which belongs to those who have died in the Lord.

Moreover, in assigning this place to prayer for the dead we support our contention by ancient practice and authorised tradition—a tradition, moreover, which has more or less the weight of direct Scriptural testimony in its favour.

Hence, we would raise our plea that prayer of this nature be revived for the dead, in private if not in public devotion, and seek to rescue from an oblivion into which it should never have fallen, a practice so salutary and so necessary to keep us in mind of the unity of man's conscious life, the continuity of spiritual progress, and the blessed intercommunion which exists between ourselves on earth and the departed in the Paradise of God.

* Heman's "Records of Women," 269.

